



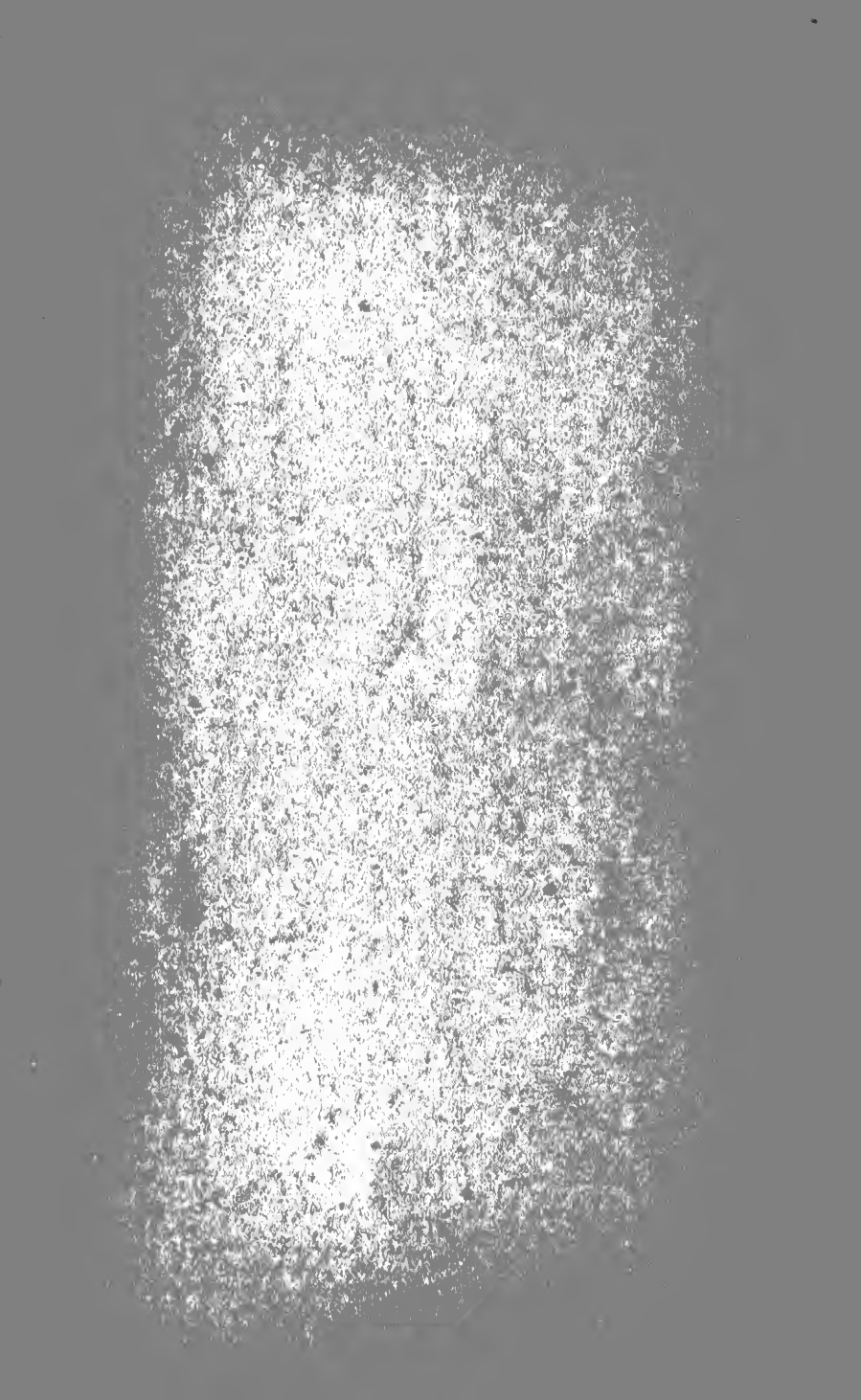
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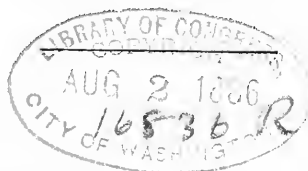
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OLIVER GOLDSMITH:

A Selection from his Works.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION BY E. E. HALE.



BOSTON:
CHAUTAUQUA PRESS,
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1886.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	v
THE TRAVELLER; or, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY . . .	1
THE DESERTED VILLAGE	21
RETALIATION: A POEM	41
PICTURES OF LIFE.	
ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PRAYER	57
A DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS CLUBS.	70
THE TRICKS OF GAMESTERS	82
MR. FUDGE, THE PUBLISHER	98
THE LITTLE BEAU	104
THE ARTS OF A MERCER.	109
THE MAN IN BLACK.	
IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY	115
VIEWS OF PHILANTHROPY	123
THE SAME, CONTINUED	128
IN THE MATTER OF OLD MAIDS AND BACHELORS . .	137
A CASE AT WESTMINSTER HALL	142
A CONCLUSION	147
BOOKS AND AUTHORS.	
THE BOOK-TAUGHT PHILOSOPHER	155
THE PROFITS OF POETRY.	159
THE LABORS OF THE LEARNED	164
THE ADVANTAGES OF A STRONG TITLE-PAGE	169
THE DISPUTES OF THE LEARNED	172

	PAGE
THE ECCENTRICITIES OF FASHION.	
A LADY OF DISTINCTION	181
THE DIFFERENCE OF CEREMONIES	185
ON LITERATURE AND TASTE.	
SENTIMENTAL COMEDY.	193
TASTE	199
CULTIVATION OF TASTE	210
THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS.	223
LITERARY TRIBUNALS	228
ON VARIOUS MATTERS.	
RECOMPENSES OF MEDIOCRITY.	235
HAPPINESS IN A GREAT MEASURE DEPENDENT ON CON- STITUTION	239
ON THE INSTABILITY OF WORLDLY GRANDEUR	244
EXTRACTS FROM THE LIFE OF RICHARD NASH, ESQ.	249

INTRODUCTION.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH is read wherever men read English ; and, where he is read, he is almost always loved.

He died comparatively young. He was but forty-five years old. He had not distinguished himself by any special research. There was no line of literature in which, at that moment, he was confessed to be a master. Men who went to his funeral called him "poor Goldsmith ;" and it is most likely that they did not know, that after a century he would be perhaps the best remembered of any of them.

Dr. Johnson seems to have surprised those around him, when he said that Goldsmith was a great man.

But if to be remembered is any fair test of greatness, Goldsmith has probably as good a right as any of that self-satisfied circle to plead the evidence of after-memory. Within a year past, his play of "She Stoops

to Conquer " has been republished, with elegant illustrations, and sent to two hundred thousand homes, as being one of the most attractive entertainments which can be provided for them. It would be fair, probably, to say that more copies of the " Vicar of Wakefield " have been printed in the last year, than were published in Goldsmith's own lifetime. And, if we bring in the test of frequent quotation, what English poet of that time furnishes more lines to the daily use of ours, than he who tells us how

" Fools who came to scoff remained to pray,"

or how

" Winter lingering chills the lap of May."

Mr. Irving, in the preface to his charming biography of Goldsmith, calls him his master, citing the beautiful lines which Dante used when he spoke of Virgil : —

" Thou art my master and my author ; thou,
Thou art the only one from whom I take
The charming style which gave to me my fame."

If we owed nothing to Goldsmith but the debt we incur because he was the master of Irving, we might well be grateful to him.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH was born in Pallas, in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman of the English Church ; and, when Oliver was two years old, he removed to Lissoy, a little village in Westmeath, where he occupied a farm of seventy acres.

This place is the "Sweet Auburn" of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village ;" though in that poem he does not call it an Irish village, and does not scruple to introduce one English peculiarity, the nightingale, a bird which is not found in Ireland. For the rest, even the details of the description of "Auburn" may be traced in Lissoy ; and till lately, at least, the traveller found them pointed out with a fond idolatry. The hawthorn only —

"That lifts its head on high,

Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye" —

had yielded to the passion for greed, which had cut it up for the sale of curiosities to travellers.

Unfortunately for him, probably, — but who shall dare say, when the result was what we know, — the family early determined that the boy Oliver had a rare genius, and must have a literary or liberal education. For this his father's means were quite inadequate ; and the cost of his training was met by various benefactions of relatives, in a happy-go-lucky kind of way,

which would have broken up, very soon, even the most regular or prudent dispositions, had he even had any. He worried through the University of Dublin, by the help of one of those wretched provisions, wrecks of feudal times, in which a poor student is permitted to exist in the college if he does some part of its menial work. His own self-respect was wounded ; and, from his own account, it can hardly be that the college was well served. He made in college some life-long friends : one of them was Edmund Burke. But he does not seem to have won the favor of the teachers. Nor is there, indeed, any evidence that their judgment of him was a matter of any importance. They were men, who, if not utterly forgotten to-day, are only remembered because they are mentioned in his biography and in Burke's.

When he had left college he was as much in doubt as he was the day he entered it, as to what he was to do in the world, that he might earn his living. He tried one and another adventure. Once he came so near settling in America, that his trunk was brought to this continent in the ship from Cork, for which he had paid his passage. Goldsmith himself was carelessly out of the way when the wind came fair for her. But for this chance, a sort of chance not unusual in his life, we lost one more generous young Irishman to

join with Montgomery and others in the opening struggles of our Revolution. He might have written songs and odes with Freneau ; or fought, perhaps died, with Montgomery. But Fate did not so order.

Such a series of half-experiments, and of utter failures, would certainly have ruined nineteen young men out of twenty. In Goldsmith's case they did not, perhaps, ruin him ; but most, or all, of the wretchedness of his after-life may be referred to the habits formed in these years of adventure, and to the disposition in himself and in his family which made any such adventure even possible. It is said that an old clergyman said, as the result of forty years' experience in the Christian ministry, that in that time he had known but two devils, and that their names, like that of "the Devil," began with D. One was Drink, and the other was Debt. Goldsmith, in his too short life, was not wholly free from the temptations of the larger of these two devils. But under his inflictions, despite the wretched habits of his time and his companions, he did not break down utterly. Of the other devil, whose name is Debt, he was the slave from the beginning to the end. We shall see that his life was shortened, and his whole career embittered, because he early learned all the ways of debt, and never relieved himself from its tyranny.

It was at last determined that he should study medicine (if the word "determine" can fairly be applied to any of the fancies which swept, from time to time, over the counsels of the Goldsmith family and their friends). Money enough was begged and borrowed for him to go to Edinburgh, and enter himself as a student of medicine there. He spent years in this study, happily and fortunately for himself. He was an affectionate observer of outward nature always. He always made friends, and was of a loving and unselfish disposition. All these are qualities which go to the make-up of a good physician. After a year and a half of study in Edinburgh, he determined to carry further his study in Leyden, and again in Paris. He had acquired some knowledge of French, in Ireland; and this availed him from the beginning, in his wanderings upon the Continent.

Wanderings they were, indeed; and probably they gave to his after-life more in a knowledge of mankind, — in a hundred phases such as only a vagabond sees, — than in any scientific knowledge of surgery or medicine which he acquired in the schools of Holland or of France. If, by any good fortune, he ever had any money, he was sure to share it with some other tramp or adventurer, — or, indeed, to give it all to him. He soon learned the way to travel in France, and to earn

the cost of travelling. With the flute he carried with him, he would play for the villagers to dance ; and they, in return, would provide for his food and his lodging. Or he would present himself at one of the convents which still existed in France, with the doors opened to almost all vagabonds,—certainly to wandering scholars ; and by a clever thesis, perhaps, or by that social charm which he always carried with him, he would secure a welcome from good-natured brethren, who probably, though they might live long lives in their retreat, never welcomed again a guest so attractive as this young Irishman.

The wonder is, indeed, that Goldsmith ever returned to England, so completely did this vagrant life accord with his tastes and habits. But the news of the death of his uncle Contarine recalled him to England ; and in 1756, when he was twenty-eight years old, he found himself in London, not because he had friends there, or had any pretence that he had any thing to do there, but under the universal law, by which all adventurers drift, in the end, to the largest city which is within the circle of their gyrations. At first he offered himself to the public of London as a practitioner of medicine. He had fairly earned the degree of M.D. ; and as “Dr. Goldsmith,” or as “the Doctor,” he was familiarly known in London until

he died. But he had scarcely a friend to introduce him. He does not seem to have had any remarkable skill as a physician ; though there is no reference to any failure he ever made, except in the management of his own case. Clear it is, that his fees, or *honorariums*, were not enough to provide him bread and butter, even on an humble plan of life. And so, fortunately for the world, he was obliged to try the staff of literature, as so many other young professional men have tried it, to help him in his limping.

The figure is Walter Scott's, as will be well remembered. And Scott accompanies it with the advice, — which so many men have rejected, because his great example lured them on in their rejection, — that one should use literature as a staff only, or a help, in the business of life ; and men come to rely on it. “It is a good staff,” he says, “and a poor crutch.” Goldsmith had so little success as a practitioner of medicine, that once and again he gave up his profession, and relied altogether on his pen for his support. Once or twice he resumed his practice, or tried to do so. But, in the end, literature was his crutch ; and, so far as worldly comfort went, he walked with this crutch as well and as ill as most men walk with crutches.

It is, on the whole, a misfortune for readers and for students, that side by side with real scholars, real poets, the men who have seen something, learned something, or felt something; side by side, that is to say, with poets, prophets, scholars, thinkers, and observers, — there grows up a race of men, whom the Greeks called sophists, who have the arts of writing, and of writing well, of talking, and of talking well, while from their own observation, their own thought, or their own feelings, they have nothing to say. Athens was full of such sophists in the time of Socrates and Plato; and, with the invention of the art of printing, the field for their career has greatly enlarged, and their numbers greatly increased. In modern times, as in Greece, they formed a “profession;” and, for centuries, the fact that a man is engaged in literature, has been no evidence that from his own life he has any thing to say.

It was Dr. Goldsmith’s misfortune, that with his rare and delicate poetic genius, and sympathetic habits of observing nature, he found himself in rivalry with these “hacks,” as they are rightly called, in the competitions of Grub Street. But he met his fate gallantly. And, in the competitions of this wretched crew, his white plume might always be seen in the advance, like Henry of Navarre’s. It is a great

thing to say, that when his fame was established, — so that men went back to find in ephemeral magazines the essays which he had, perhaps, been paid for in shillings, — these essays were not unworthy of his reputation. In this regard he reminds an American, of our own Hawthorne. And one is tempted to ask whether, when Hawthorne was minting coin for the favored readers of the “American Monthly Magazine,” he did not sometimes look back to the time, a hundred years before, when Goldsmith was writing for one and another London magazine, which, but for his magic, would be forgotten to-day.

He was most fertile in expedients ; and the publishers soon found, that for once, to borrow the phrase of a great showman, “the mermaid was alive.” Goldsmith sometimes was late in meeting his appointments ; and this is a sin in authors, which, for good reasons, booksellers do not easily pardon. But the men on Grub Street soon knew how good his works were. It is a curious fact about the publishers of books, that the great majority of them, since their business was invented, have known very little of the wares in which they have dealt. Success in their calling requires, rather, that they should know their market ; should be able to judge, promptly and well, what the readers of their time require, and what they will buy. In Gold-

smith's case, he was unfortunate that he had no great publisher to deal with. There was no great publisher in London in that time. He did make allegiance with Newbury, the publisher of children's books for two generations or more, in St. Paul's churchyard; and, under Newbury's auspices, some of Goldsmith's first things saw the light.

Newbury had founded the "Monthly Review," a magazine, which, with many vicissitudes, survived nearly to our time; and for this, Goldsmith was engaged, on a fixed salary, as a regular contributor. The days when special articles were specially paid for, by the publishers of such journals, had not dawned.

From the time of Goldsmith's arrival in London, when he was twenty-eight years old, to his death, when he was forty-six, he spent most of his life in assiduous work with his pen. He was also an usher in a school; and, as has been said, he announced himself as a physician. One of his most loyal patients was a journeyman printer, who introduced him to the great novelist Richardson. Richardson employed him as a proof-correcter, and introduced him to Dr. Young, the author of the "Night Thoughts," which were then highly esteemed. Both these successful men were kind to the young doctor, and to Goldsmith their introductions were of great help in his new career.

Of all the books we owe to his genius, that which had the least appearance of a hack's job is, as might be expected, that which is most widely known, and has done most for his reputation. The "Vicar of Wakefield" was not written to order. He wrote it because he wanted to write it, and it was finished before it was sold. This is more than can be said of most of his work, which was, alas ! generally paid for before it was begun. When it was finished, Goldsmith showed the manuscript to Dr. Johnson, whom he had then come to know, who was always kind to him, and who had great authority in the London world of letters. Johnson approved it ; but confessed afterwards, that he did not prize it as it deserved, and that he had not, for a moment, suspected its great success. At his instance, Francis Newbury, a nephew of the publisher of the "Monthly Review," bought the manuscript, and what we should call the copyright, for sixty guineas, — about three hundred dollars. In the state of letters, then, Dr. Johnson said that this was "no mean price." Strange to say, the manuscript was held by the publisher two whole years without printing. When it was printed, in 1766, the public immediately recognized its worth. It ran through four editions before the end of the year, — a sale then considered marvellous. But Francis Newbury never paid Gold-

smith any thing more for it than the original sixty guineas.

The book at once won the place which to this day it holds in English literature. The simplicity of the language, the pathos of the story, the domestic character of all the situations, so familiar that every reader can sympathize, the tenderness and affection which are beneath every line, make it a favorite of learned and simple alike. The style, for people who study the mechanism of English expression, may be called perfect ; and, by the tricksters of speech, it is proposed as a model. Unfortunately for the book itself, therefore, it has been chosen, in foreign countries, as the book in the English language most fit for pupils to begin upon. And while girls and boys in America read Voltaire's "Charles XII.," or About's "Roman d'un Jeune Homme Pauvre," the children of France and Germany learn their English by translating the loves of Olivia, and the misfortunes of Dr. Primrose.

After Goldsmith had written the "Vicar of Wakefield," and before he had published it, he produced, in another stress of poverty, the manuscript of the "Traveller." He had been in London eight years, and had not, in all his work for the booksellers, published any thing with his own name. With much hesitation he revised it, with great care, — it seems to have

been written long before,—and referred it to Johnson's judgment. Johnson's judgment on such matters was often very poor ; but in this case, fortunately for the world, he was delighted with the poem, and said so cordially. He even wrote a few lines in the end of it, which are, as might be expected, among the poorer lines of the piece. It was published by the older Newbury, in a quarto, as was the fashion of that time, on the 19th of December, 1764, and was hailed with enthusiasm. Goldsmith's reputation as a poet was made ; and, from that moment to this, the opinion of men of sense and feeling has never wavered. The poem had every thing which Johnson liked in a poem,—in the perfection of its finish, in its freedom from extravagance on either side, and in the decorous simplicity of its plan. It has beyond this, qualities which Johnson had not, and which he was hardly able to appreciate, but which the public, always wiser than any man or any woman, infallibly marks with the seal of its loyal approbation. From the "Traveller," the biographers of Goldsmith have selected many passages descriptive of his own life. Such is his description of those piping days of his journey through France.

"Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,

How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr flew;
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancers' skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour.
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore."

The poem, indeed, fulfils the sternest requisition of criticism, substantially laid down by Horace. Every line can stand for its own life, and prove its own right to remain, uneras'd by the sharpest or most unkind file. There is not a line but has a right to be. The same may be said of "The Deserted Village." And when one thinks of these poems, and remembers the lines from them which are household words, one shudders to recollect the months and years of labor which Goldsmith forced himself to give to subjects in which he took no interest, but that he earned by them his daily bread.

Meanwhile, he gradually made the acquaintance of the men of letters best known and most esteemed in London. When this is said, however, it must be

remembered, that, between the men of letters and the men of science and philosophy, there was a wider division than would be drawn now. An intimate acquaintance, first with Richardson and Young, and afterward with Johnson and the Literary Club, does not seem to have involved an acquaintance with Hume, or Robertson, or Adam Smith, or Priestley. At the time when Goldsmith was enjoying his new fame as a poet, Benjamin Franklin was in London, living near him, and in familiar intercourse with Hume, Priestley, Pringle, the head of the Royal Institution, Price, and Shipley, the bishop of St. Asaph. But in the somewhat full correspondence of Goldsmith and of Franklin, we have found no evidence that the two ever met. When Franklin writes to his friends of his improvement in musical glasses, one does remember the lady joined her practice of them with her study of Shakspeare.

In the solid and faithful work which he did for the booksellers, we are to remember Goldsmith's "History of Rome." For near a century it held its own on book-shelves, among the "books which no gentleman's library could be without." It had no merit, and pretended to none, as a critical examination of rival authorities. It had the merit of a charming English style. One could read it, and, reading it,

could enjoy it. It is the same merit, which, at the same time, gave Hume's "History of England" the place which it never deserved as a standard, and yet has never lost. His "Animated Nature," a book of natural history, still fascinates the fortunate boy or girl who lights upon it among the stores of an old library. He worked on it as one works on job-work. But he lighted it up by his own memories and observations. He never forgot, in this work or in any, that an author's first necessity is to be read. He must be entertaining. If not, he might as well write with blue ink on blue paper. Let him command his reader's sympathy and attention first. Then he will have a chance to instruct that reader, correct him, or to make him over as he will.

This hurried review shows, that, in less than twenty years, Goldsmith published three poems, which have taken the very first rank; that he published the novel which is often called the best novel written in English; that he published a history which held its own for a hundred years; an epitome of natural history, which has survived the discoveries of many generations, and that he wrote two of the comedies recognized among the best on the English stage. To-day this would seem to be a great deal, and is. But it is impossible to read Goldsmith's life, without a cer-

tain feeling of annoyance, because, from such a well, the world did not draw more ; and we ask, half provoked, " Is this all ? "

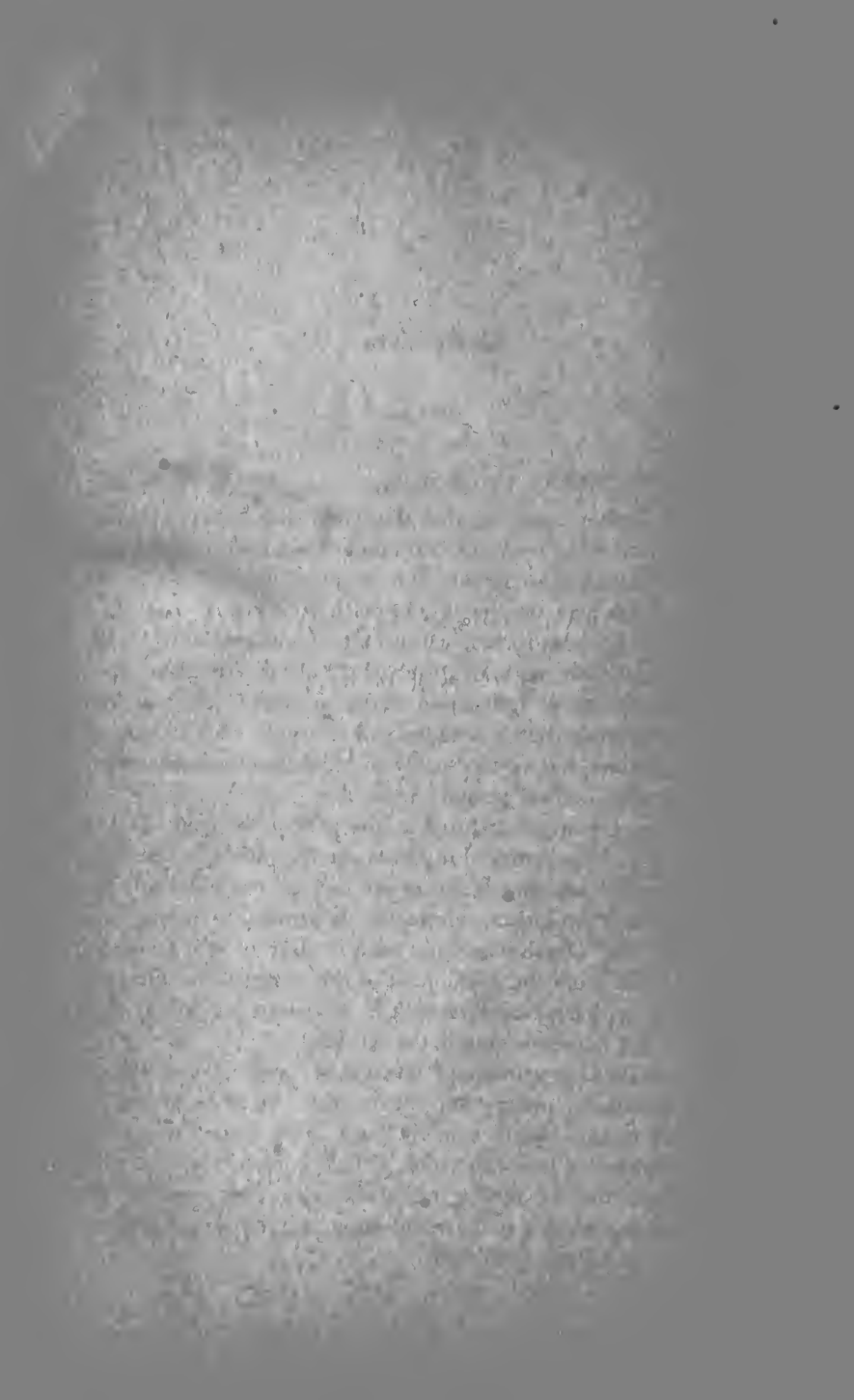
For the story — not very amusing or attractive — shows that he was always at work in fetters. He was benevolent to a fault, too benevolent ; that is, that he would give to beggars what belonged to his creditors. He had a certain vanity in dress, and in other matters, which betrayed him into expenditures which he could not afford. His life, therefore, was frittered away with quarrels with creditors, and the duns of tradesmen and landladies. Indeed, the derision and pity of those around him, did much to make him wretched. The Devil of Debt took possession of him ; and no man shall say what are the unwritten poems and romances for which, but for that devil, we might now be thanking Goldsmith.

It would be absurd to say that Goldsmith made any great contributions to human progress ; that he added, what is called rather pompously, any " great thought " to the intellectual advance of the world ; or that, for its moral training, he made any new revelation. But for that other object, not less important, of making life pleasant and happy, of cheering homes otherwise sad, of driving out impure thoughts by pure, or making long hours short, or lonely

days cheerful, few authors who have written in the English language have done so much as he. It is impossible to read his life without feeling that he could have done more and better, had he held himself better in hand. He worked like a slave, generally, because he would not be his own master ; and the work of a slave is almost sure to be poor work. But while we repeat this, we must not forget what we have. We must enjoy that, and may well study it, hopeful indeed, that, among a hundred thousand students, the study may possibly give us one more Washington Irving.



THE TRAVELLER ; OR, A PROSPECT
OF SOCIETY.



Dedication.

(1764.)

TO THE REV. HENRY GOLDSMITH.

Dear sir, — I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this Poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great and the laborers are but few; while you have left the field of ambition, where the laborers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest.

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations; but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her; they engross all that favor once shown to her, and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright.

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in great danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favor of blank verse and Pindaric odes, chorusses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it: and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say; for error is ever talkative.

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous, — I mean party. Party entirely distorts the judgment, and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet: his tawdry lampoons are called satires; his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavored to show that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own; that every state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge better than yourself how far these positions are illustrated in this Poem. I am, dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Brother,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE TRAVELLER; OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY.

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Scheld or wandering Po ;
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door ;
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies ;
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravell'd fondly turns to thee ;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain.

10

Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend :
Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire :
Blest that abode where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair :
Blest be those feasts, with simple plenty crown'd,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale ;

20

Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good.

But me, not destin'd such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care ;
Impell'd, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view ;
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies ;
My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own. 30

E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend ;
And plac'd on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where an hundred realms appear ;
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride.

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store should thankless pride repine ?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain
That good which makes each humbler bosom vain ? 40
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man ;
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind.
Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendor crown'd ;
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round ;
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale ;
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale ;
For me your tributary stores combine :
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine. 50

As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er ;
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still :
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleas'd with each good that Heaven to man supplies :
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small ;
And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
Some spot to real happiness consign'd, 60
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest.

But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know ?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own ;
Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease :
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine, 70
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam ;
His first, best country ever is at home.
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind ;
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessing even. 80

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labor's earnest call :
With food as well the peasant is supply'd
On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side ;
And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
These rocks by custom turn to beds of down.
From art more various are the blessings sent ;
Wealth, commerce, honor, liberty, content.
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest. 90
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails ;
And honor sinks where commerce long prevails.
Hence every state, to one lov'd blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone.
Each to the fav'rite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends :
Till carried to excess in each domain,
This fav'rite good begets peculiar pain.

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies : 100
Here for a while my proper cares resign'd,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind ;
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast.

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends :
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride ;
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene. 110

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest.
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground ;
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year ;
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die ;
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil ;
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land.

120

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows.
In florid beauty groves and fields appear ;
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here.
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign :
Though poor, luxurious ; though submissive, vain ;
Though grave, yet trifling ; zealous, yet untrue ;
And e'en in penance planning sins anew.

130

All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind ;
For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date
When commerce proudly flourish'd through the state :
At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies,
The canvas glow'd, beyond e'en nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teem'd with human form,
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores display'd her sail ;

140

While nought remain'd of all that riches gave,
But towns unmann'd, and lords without a slave :
And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill.

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride ;
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find.

Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp array'd,
The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade, 150
Processions form'd for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove.

By sports like these are all their cares beguil'd ;
The sports of children satisfy the child.

Each nobler aim, repress'd by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul ;
While low delights succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind :

As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defac'd by time and tott'ring in decay, 160
There in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed ;
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile.

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display ;
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread.

No product here the barren hills afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword : 170

No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May : }
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest.

Yet, still, e'en here content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm.
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts tho' small,
He sees his little lot the lot of all ;
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed ; 180
No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal
To make him loath his vegetable meal ;
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting fits him to the soil.
Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
Breathes the keen air, and carols as he goes ;
With patient angle trolls the finny deep ;
Or drives his vent'rous plough-share to the steep ;
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage into day. 190
At night returning, every labor sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed ;
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze ;
While his lov'd partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board :
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed.

Thus every good his native wilds impart
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart ; 200

And e'en those ills that round his mansion rise
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies.
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ;
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
But bind him to his native mountains more.

Such are the charms to barren states assign'd ;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confin'd. 210
Yet let them only share the praises due :
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few ;
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest ;
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies
That first excites desire, and then supplies ;
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy ;
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame. 220
Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
Unquench'd by want, unfann'd by strong desire ;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow :
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ;
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unalter'd, unimprov'd the manners run,

And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart.
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ;
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Thro' life's more cultur'd walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispers'd, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky.

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn ; and France displays her bright domain. 240
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleas'd with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshen'd from the wave the zephyr flew ;
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mock'd all tune, and marr'd the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour. 250
Alike all ages. Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skill'd in gestic lore,
Has frisk'd beneath the burthen of threescore.

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display ;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away ;
Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honor forms the social temper here.
Honor, that praise which real merit gains,
Or e'en imaginary worth obtains, 260

Here passes current : paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land ;
From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise.
They please, are pleas'd ; they give to get esteem ;
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem.

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise ;
For praise too dearly lov'd, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought, 270
And the weak soul, within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast.
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart ;
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace ;
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year ;
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause. 280

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosom'd in the deep where Holland lies.
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow ;
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore. 290

While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile :
The slow canal, the yellow-blossom'd vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,
The crowded mart, the cultivated plain, —
A new creation rescued from his reign.

Thus while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain. 300
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here display'd. Their much-lov'd wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts :
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear ;
E'en liberty itself is barter'd here.
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies ;
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys ;
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonorable graves, 310
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm.

Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old !
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold ;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow :
How much unlike the sons of Britain now !

Fir'd at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring ;
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than fam'd Hydaspes glide. 320

There all around the gentlest breezes stray ;
There gentle music melts on every spray ;
Creation's mildest charms are there combin'd,
Extremes are only in the master's mind !
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great ;
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by ;
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashion'd fresh from Nature's hand, 330
Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
True to imagin'd right, above control,
While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man.

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictur'd here ;
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear :
Too blest indeed, were such without alloy !
But foster'd e'en by Freedom ills annoy :
That independence Britons prize too high
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie ; 340
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repell'd ;
Ferments arise, imprison'd factions roar,
Repressed ambition struggles round her shore,
Till, over-wrought, the general system feels,
Its motion stop, or frenzy fire the wheels.

Nor this the worst. As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honor fail to sway, 350

Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe.
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown :
Till time may come, when, stript of all her charms,
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toil'd and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonor'd die. 360

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great :
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire.
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel ;
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favor's fostering sun ;
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure !
I only would repress them to secure : 370
For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil ;
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach,
Is but to lay proportion'd loads on each.
Hence, should one order disproportioned grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below.

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires !
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms ; 380

But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free,
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law,
The wealth of climes where savage nations roam
Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home,
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart ; 390
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne.

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour
When first ambition struck at regal power ;
And thus polluting honor in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force.
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste? 400
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scattered hamlets rose
In barren solitary pomp repose?
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling long-frequented village fall?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,
Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main ; 410

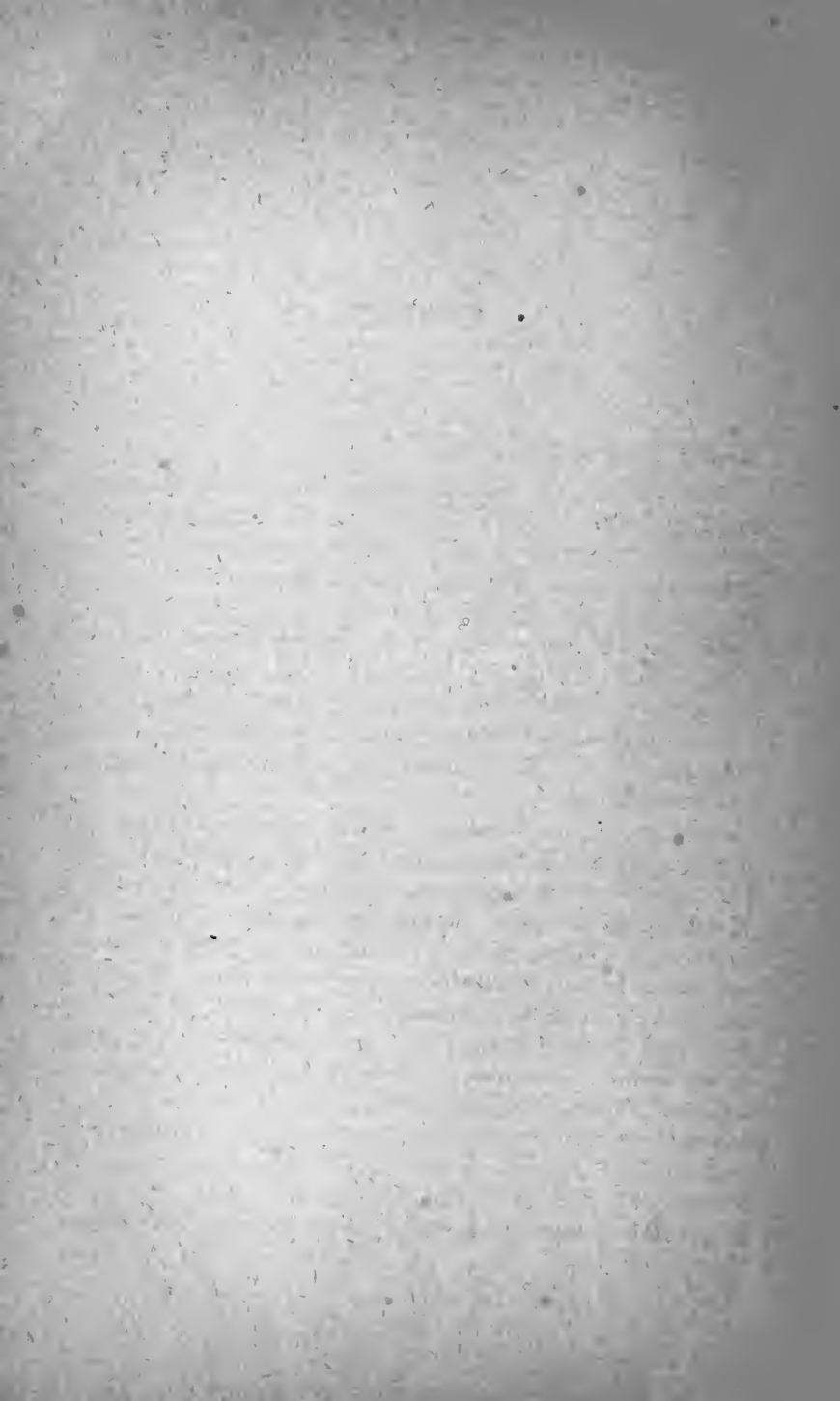
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests and through dangerous ways,
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim ;
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go, 420
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine.

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind :
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure ! 430
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find :
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own.



THE DESERTED VILLAGE.



Dedication.

(1770.)

TO SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

Dear Sir,—I can have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation, or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel: and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this Poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire; but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written; that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege, and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those miseries real which I here attempt to display. But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not; the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best,

an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem.

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries; and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me. For twenty or thirty years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages, and all the wisdom of antiquity in that particular as erroneous. Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone. Indeed so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question, that merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right. I am,

Dear Sir, your sincere Friend and ardent Admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE.

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain ;
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed :
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm, 10
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed ; 20

And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired ;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out, to tire each other down ;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place ;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove. 30
These were thy charms, sweet village ! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please :
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed :
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
{ Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
{ And desolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain. 40
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way ;
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall ;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land. 50

{ Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ;
For him light labor spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more : 60
His best companions, innocence and health ;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered ; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room, 70
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ;
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew, 80

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and GOD has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose :
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill, 90
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw ;
And, as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return — and die at home at last.

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labor with an age of ease ; 100
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep ;
Nor surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate ;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend ;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way ; 110

And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.

There, as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below ;

The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,

The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,

The playful children just let loose from school, 120

The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,

{ And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind ; —

These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,

And filled each pause the nightingale had made.

But now the sounds of population fail,

No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,

No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,

For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.

All but yon widowed, solitary thing,

That feebly bends beside the plashy spring : 130

She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,

To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,

To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,

To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ;

She only left of all the harmless train,

The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,

And still where many a garden-flower grows wild ;

There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,

The village preacher's modest mansion rose. 140

A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place ;
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train ;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain : 150
The long-remember'd beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ; 160
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way. 170

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul ;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place ;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
{ And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray. 180
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran ;
E'en children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed ;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed :
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm, 190
{ Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view ;
I knew him well, and every truant knew :
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face ;

Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he ;
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned.
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault ;
The village all declared how much he knew :
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too ;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge : 210
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill ;
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still ;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around ;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye, 220
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where gray-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlor splendors of that festive place :
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door ;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day ; 230

The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose ;
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay ;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.

Vain transitory splendors ! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall ?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart. 240
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail ;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear ;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round ;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest. 250

Yes ! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train ;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art ;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway ;
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed, — 260

In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain ;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.

Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore ; 270
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied ;
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds :
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth ;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen, 281
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green :
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies ;
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendor feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slight's every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes ; 290

But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress.
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed :
In Nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendors rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise ;
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band, 300
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there ?
To see profusion that he must not share ; 310
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind ;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade ;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here richly deck'd admits the gorgeous train : 320

Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distress ;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ; 33°
Now lost to all ; her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.

Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train, —
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread ! 34°

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ; 35°

Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around,
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake,
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they ;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green, 360
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good heaven ! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away ;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep. 370
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe ;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for her father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose, 380

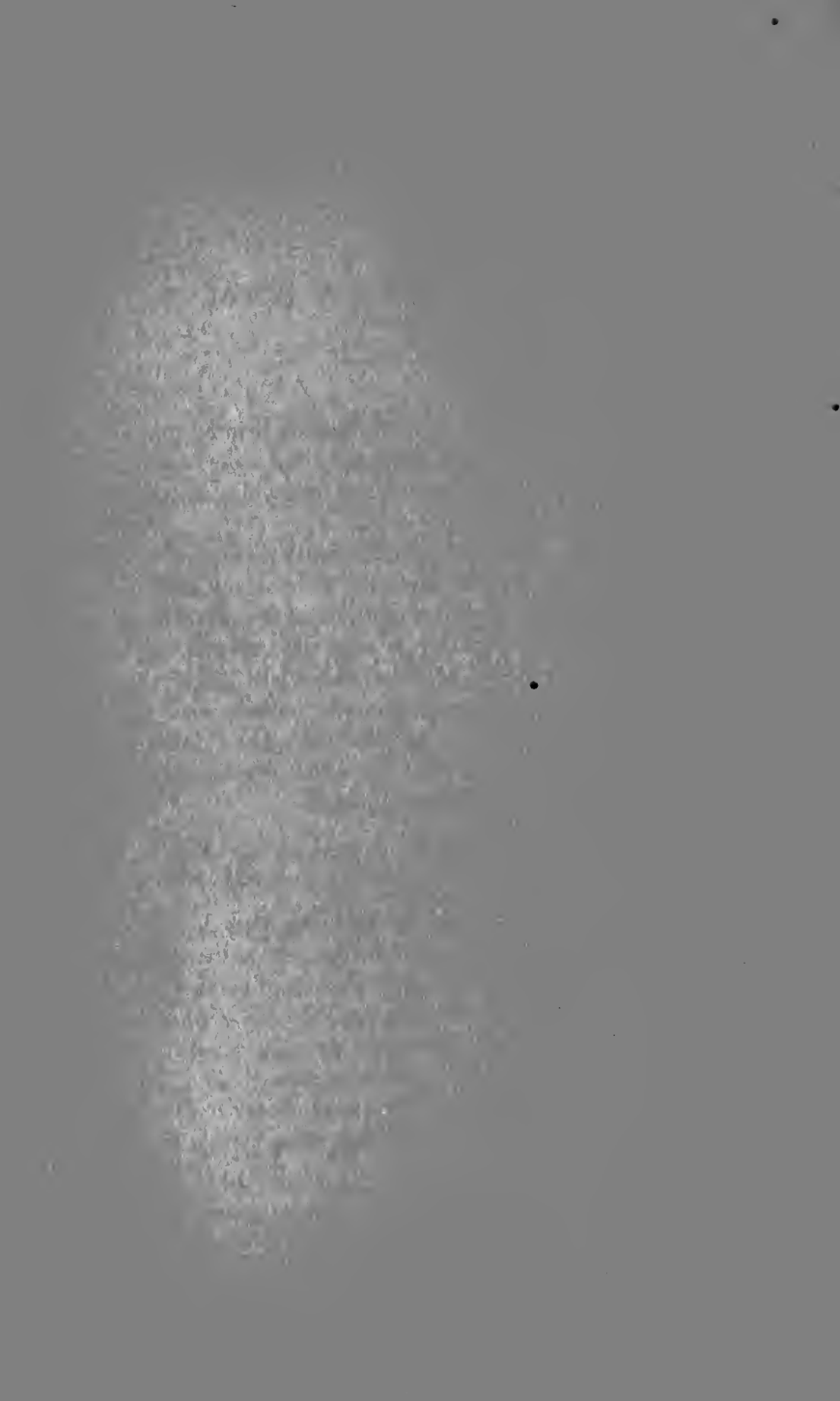
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury ! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee !
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy !
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigor not their own. 390
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldly woe ;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done ;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale, 400
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ; 410

Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervors glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow, 420
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigors of the inclement clime ;
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain :
Teach him, that states of native strength possess,
Though very poor, may still be very blest ;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the labored mole away ;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky. 430

RETALIATION: A POEM.



RETALIATION: A POEM.¹

[As the cause of writing the following printed poem called *Retaliation* has not yet been fully explained, a person concerned in the business begs leave to give the following just and minute account of the whole affair.

At a meeting of a company of gentlemen who were well known to each other, and diverting themselves, among many other things, with the peculiar oddities of Dr. Goldsmith, who never would allow a superior in any art, from writing poetry down to dancing a hornpipe, the Doctor with great eagerness insisted upon trying his epigrammatic powers with Mr. Garrick, and each of them was to write the other's epitaph. Mr. Garrick immediately said that his epitaph was finished, and spoke the following distich extempore:—

“Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
Who wrote like an angel, but talked liked poor Poll.”

Goldsmith, upon the company's laughing very heartily, grew very thoughtful, and either would not or could not write anything at that time; however, he went to work, and some weeks after produced the following printed poem called *Retaliation*, which has been much admired, and gone through several editions. The public in general have been mistaken in imagining that this poem was written in anger by the Doctor: it was just the contrary; the whole on all sides was done with the greatest good humor.]

¹ This poem, the last work of Goldsmith, was not printed until after his death. The above description of the manner of its writing was appended to Cunningham's edition of Goldsmith.



RETALIATION : A POEM.

(1774.)

OF old, when Scarron his companions invited,
Each guest brought his dish, and the feast was united ;
If our landlord ¹ supplies us with beef and with fish,
Let each guest bring himself, and he brings the best
dish :

Our Dean ² shall be venison, just fresh from the plains ;
Our Burke ³ shall be tongue with the garnish of brains ;
Our Will ⁴ shall be wild fowl, of excellent flavor,
And Dick ⁵ with his pepper shall heighten the savor ;
Our Cumberland's ⁶ sweet-bread its place shall obtain,
And Douglas ⁷ is pudding, substantial and plain ; 10

¹ The master of the St. James's coffee-house, where the Doctor, and the friends he has characterized in his poem, occasionally dined.

² Doctor Barnard, Dean of Derry and afterwards Bishop of Limerick.

³ The Right Hon. Edmund Burke.

⁴ Mr. William Burke, late secretary to General Conway, member for Bedwin, and a relative of Edmund Burke.

⁵ Mr. Richard Burke, a barrister, and younger brother of the great statesman.

⁶ Mr. Richard Cumberland, the dramatist.

⁷ Dr. Douglas, canon of Windsor, an ingenious Scotch gentleman, who was made Bishop of Carlisle, and afterwards Bishop of Salisbury.

Our Garrick's¹ a sallad, for in him we see
Oil, vinegar, sugar, and saltness agree ;
To make out the dinner, full certain I am,
That Ridge² is anchovy, and Reynolds³ is lamb,
That Hickey's⁴ a capon, and, by the same rule,
Magnanimous Goldsmith a gooseberry fool.
At a dinner so various, at such a repast,
Who'd not be a glutton, and stick to the last?
Here, waiter, more wine ! let me sit while I'm able,
Till all my companions sink under the table ; 20
Then, with chaos and blunders encircling my head,
Let me ponder, and tell what I think of the dead.

Here lies the good Dean,⁵ re-united to earth,
Who mixed reason with pleasure, and wisdom with mirth :
If he had any faults, he has left us in doubt ;
At least, in six weeks I could not find 'em out ;
Yet some have declared, and it can't be denied 'em,
That sly-boots was cursedly cunning to hide 'em.

Here lies our good Edmund,⁶ whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it or blame it too much ; 30
Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind ;
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat
To persuade Tommy Townshend⁷ to lend him a vote ;

¹ David Garrick.

² Counsellor John Ridge, a gentleman belonging to the Irish bar.

³ Sir Joshua Reynolds.

⁴ An eminent Irish attorney.

⁵ See note 2, p. 45.

⁶ See note 3, p. 45.

⁷ Mr. T. Townshend, M.P. for Whitchurch, afterwards Lord Sydney.

Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining ;
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit ;
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit,
For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
And too fond of the *right* to pursue the *expedient*. 40
In short, 'twas his fate, unemployed, or in place, sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Here lies honest William,¹ whose heart was a mint,
While the owner ne'er knew half the good that was in't ;
The pupil of impulse, it forced him along,
His conduct still right, with his argument wrong ;
Still aiming at honor, yet fearing to roam,
The coachman was tipsy, the chariot drove home ;
Would you ask for his merits? — alas ! he had none :
What was good was spontaneous, his faults were his
own. 50

Here lies honest Richard,² whose fate I must sigh at ;
Alas, that such frolic should now be so quiet !
What spirits were his ! what wit and what whim !
Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb ;
Now wrangling and grumbling to keep up the ball,
Now teasing and vexing, yet laughing at all !
In short, so provoking a devil was Dick,
That we wished him full ten times a day at Old Nick ;
But, missing his mirth and agreeable vein,
As often we wished to have Dick back again. 60

¹ See note 4, p. 45.

² Mr. Richard Burke, see p. 45. At different times he fractured both an arm and a leg.

Here Cumberland lies, having acted his parts,
The Terence of England, the mender of hearts ;
A flattering painter, who made it his care
To draw men as they ought to be, not as they are.
His gallants are all faultless, his women divine,
And comedy wonders at being so fine ;
Like a tragedy-queen he has dizen'd her out,
Or rather like tragedy giving a rout.
His fools have their follies so lost in a crowd
Of virtues and feelings, that folly grows proud ; 70
And coxcombs, alike in their failings alone,
Adopting his portraits, are pleased with their own.
Say, where has our poet this malady caught ?
Or wherefore his characters thus without fault ?
Say, was it that vainly directing his view
To find out men's virtues, and finding them few,
Quite sick of pursuing each troublesome elf,
He grew lazy at last, and drew from himself ?

Here Douglas retires from his toils to relax,
The scourge of impostors, the terror of quacks : 80
Come, all ye quack bards, and ye quacking divines,
Come and dance on the spot where your tyrant re-
clines :

When satire and censure encircled his throne,
I feared for your safety, I feared for my own ;
But now he is gone, and we want a detector,
Our Dodds ¹ shall be pious, our Kenricks ² shall lecture,

¹ The Rev. Dr. Dodd, hanged for forgery in 1777.

² Dr. Kenrick, who read lectures at the Devil Tavern, under the title of
"The School of Shakespeare," and one of Goldsmith's bitterest foes.

Macpherson ¹ write bombast, and call it a style,
Our Townshend make speeches, and I shall compile ;
New Lauders and Bowers ² the Tweed shall cross over,
No countryman living their tricks to discover ; 90
Detection her taper shall quench to a spark,
And Scotchman meet Scotchman, and cheat in the dark.

Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can ;
An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man.
As an actor, confessed without rival to shine :
As a wit, if not first, in the very first line :
Yet, with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
Like an ill-judging beauty, his colors he spread,
And beplastered with rouge his own natural red. 100
On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting ;
'Twas only that, when he was off, he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way,
He turned and he varied full ten times a day :
Though secure of our hearts, yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick :
He cast off his friends, as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them
back.

Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came ;
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame ; 110
Till his relish grown callous, almost to disease,
Who peppered the highest, was surest to please.

¹ James Macpherson, Esq. Goldsmith is alluding to his translation of Homer.

² William Lauder and Archibald Bower, Scotch writers.

But let us be candid, and speak out our mind :
 If dunces applauded, he paid them in kind.
 Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys,¹ and Woodfalls² so grave,
 What a commerce was yours, while you got and you
 gave !
 How did Grub-street re-echo the shouts that you
 raised,
 While he was be-Rosciused, and you were bepraised.
 But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
 To act as an angel and mix with the skies :
 Those poets who owe their best fame to his skill
 Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will ;
 Old Shakespeare receive him with praise and with love,
 And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above.³

120

¹ Mr. Hugh Kelly, author of "False Delicacy," "Word to the Wise," "Clementina," "School for Wives," etc., etc.

² Mr. William Woodfall, printer of the Morning Chronicle.

³ The following poems, composed in humorous revenge by Garrick, are found in Davies's "Life of Garrick," p. 17, top.

JUPITER AND MERCURY: A FABLE.

HERE *Hermes*, says *Jove*, who with nectar was mellow,
 Go, fetch me some clay; I will make an *odd fellow* !
 Right and wrong shall be jumbled, — much gold and some dross;
 Without cause be he pleased, without cause be he cross;
 Be sure, as I work, to throw in contradictions,
 A great love of truth, yet a mind turn'd to fictions!
 Now mix these ingredients, which, warmed in the baking,
 Turned to *learning* and *gaming*, *religion* and *raking*.
 With the love of a wench, let his writings be chaste;
 Tip his tongue with strange matter, his pen with fine taste;
 That the rake and the poet o'er all may prevail,
 Set fire to his head, and set fire to his tail:
 For the joy of each sex, on the world I'll bestow it,
 This *scholar*, *rake*, *Christian*, *dupe*, *gamester*, and *poet*;

Here Hickey reclines, a most blunt, pleasant creature,
 And slander itself must allow him good nature ;
 He cherished his friend, and he relished a bumper ;
 Yet one fault he had, and that one was a thumper.
 Perhaps you may ask if the man was a miser :
 I answer, No, no ; for he always was wiser. 130
 Too courteous, perhaps, or obligingly flat ?
 His very worst foe can't accuse him of that.
 Perhaps he confided in men as they go,
 And so was too foolishly honest ? Ah no !
 Then what was his failing ? come tell it, and burn ye.
 He was — could he help it ? — a special attorney.

Here Reynolds is laid, and, to tell you my mind,
 He has not left a wiser or better behind.
 His pencil was striking, resistless, and grand ;
 His manners were gentle, complying, and bland : 140
 Still born to improve us in every part,
 His pencil our faces, his manners our heart.
 To coxcombs averse, yet most civilly steering :
 When they judged without skill, he was still hard of
 hearing ;

Though a mixture so odd, he shall merit great fame,
 And among brother mortals — be GOLDSMITH his name.
 When on earth this strange meteor no more shall appear,
 You, *Hermes*, shall fetch him — to make us sport here.

On Dr. Goldsmith's Characteristical Cookery.

A JEU D'ESPRIT.

ARE these the choice dishes the Doctor has sent us ?
 Is this the great poet whose works so content us ?
 This Goldsmith's fine feast, who has written fine books ?
 Heaven sends us good *meat* but the *Devil sends cooks*.

When they talk'd of their Raphaels, Corregios, and
 stuff,
 He shifted his trumpet,¹ and only took snuff.

POSTSCRIPT.

[After the fourth edition of this Poem was printed, the publisher received the following epitaph on Mr. Whitefoord,² from a friend of the late Doctor Goldsmith.]

HERE Whitefoord reclines, and, deny it who can,
 Though he merrily lived, he is now a grave man.
 Rare compound of oddity, frolic, and fun !
 Who relished a joke, and rejoiced in a pun ;
 Whose temper was generous, open, sincere ;
 A stranger to flattery, a stranger to fear ;
 Who scattered around wit and humor at will ;
 Whose daily *bon mots* half a column might fill ;
 A Scotchman, from pride and from prejudice free ;
 A scholar, yet surely no pedant was he. 10

What pity, alas ! that so liberal a mind
 Should so long be to newspaper essays confined !
 Who perhaps to the summit of science could soar,
 Yet content "if the table he set on a roar ;"
 Whose talents to fill any station were fit,
 Yet happy if Woodfall³ confess'd him a wit.

¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds was so deaf, as to be under the necessity of using an ear-trumpet in company.

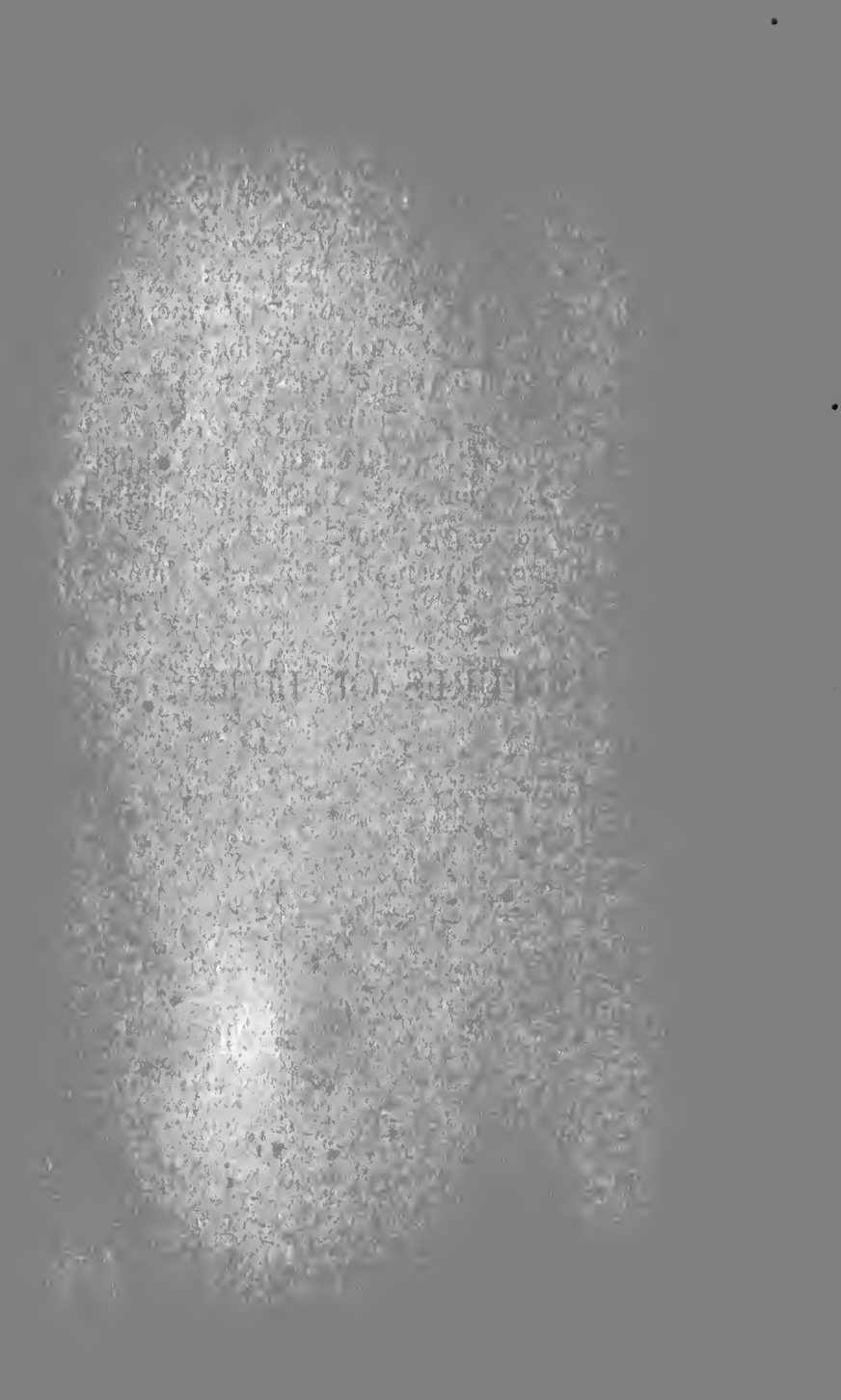
² Mr. Caleb Whitefoord, author of many humorous essays. He was so notorious a punster, that Doctor Goldsmith used to say it was impossible to keep his company without being infected with the itch of punning.

³ Mr. H. S. Woodfall, printer of the Public Advertiser, and the Woodfall of Junius.

Ye newspaper witlings ! ye pert scribbling folks !
Who copied his squibs, and re-echoed his jokes ;
Ye tame imitators, ye servile herd, come,
Still follow your master, and visit his tomb : 20
To deck it, bring with you festoons of the vine,
And copious libations bestow on his shrine ;
Then strew all around it (you can do no less)
Cross-readings,¹ ship-news, and mistakes of the press.

Merry Whitefoord, farewell ! for thy sake I admit
That a Scot may have humor, — I had almost said wit :
This debt to thy memory I cannot refuse,
“Thou best humored man with the worst humored
Muse.”

¹ Mr. Whitefoord has frequently indulged the town with humorous pieces under those titles in the Public Advertiser.



PICTURES OF LIFE.



ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER.

I AM fond of amusement, in whatever company it is to be found ; and wit, though dressed in rags, is ever pleasing to me. I went some days ago to take a walk in St. James's Park, about the hour in which company leave it to go to dinner. There were but few in the walks, and those who stayed seemed, by their looks, rather more willing to forget that they had an appetite than gain one. I sat down on one of the benches, at the other end of which was seated a man in very shabby clothes.

We continued to groan, to hem, and to cough, as usual upon such occasions ; and at last ventured upon conversation. "I beg pardon, sir," cried I, "but I think I have seen you before ; your face is familiar to me." — "Yes, sir," replied he, "I have a good familiar face, as my friends tell me. I am as well known in every town in England as the dromedary or live crocodile. You must understand, sir, that I have been these sixteen years Merry Andrew to a puppet-show ; last Bartholomew Fair my master and I quarrelled,

beat each other, and parted ; he to sell his puppets to the pincushion-makers in Rosemary Lane, and I to starve in St. James's Park."

"I am sorry, sir, that a person of your appearance should labor under any difficulties." — "Oh, sir," returned he, "my appearance is very much at your service ; but though I cannot boast of eating much, yet there are few that are merrier : if I had twenty thousand a year, I should be very merry ; and, thank the Fates, though not worth a groat, I am very merry still. If I have threepence in my pocket, I never refuse to be my three-halfpence ; and if I have no money, I never scorn to be treated by any that are kind enough to pay my reckoning. What think you, sir, of a steak and a tankard ? You shall treat me now ; and I will treat you again, when I find you in the Park in love with eating, and without money to pay for a dinner."

As I never refuse a small expense for the sake of a merry companion, we instantly adjourned to a neighboring ale house, and in a few moments had a frothing tankard and a smoking steak spread on the table before us. It is impossible to express how much the sight of such good cheer improved my companion's vivacity. "I like this dinner, sir," says he, "for three reasons : first, because I am naturally fond of beef ; secondly, because I am hungry ; and, thirdly and lastly, because I get it for nothing : no meat eats so sweet as that for which we do not pay."

He therefore now fell to, and his appetite seemed

to correspond with his inclination. After dinner was over, he observed that the steak was tough : “and yet, sir,” returns he, “bad as it was, it seemed a rump-steak to me. Oh, the delights of poverty and a good appetite ! We beggars are the very fondlings of Nature ; the rich she treats like an arrant stepmother ; they are pleased with nothing : cut a steak from what part you will, and it is insupportably tough ; dress it up with pickles, and even pickles cannot procure them an appetite. But the whole creation is filled with good things for the beggar ; Calvert’s butt out-tastes Champagne, and Sedgeley’s home-brewed excels Tokay. Joy, joy, my blood ! though our estates lie nowhere, we have fortunes wherever we go. If an inundation sweeps away half the grounds of Cornwall, I am content — I have no lands there ; if the stocks sink, that gives me no uneasiness — I am no Jew.” The fellow’s vivacity, joined to his poverty, I own, raised my curiosity to know something of his life and circumstances ; and I entreated that he would indulge my desire. “That I will, sir,” said he, “and welcome ; only let us drink to prevent our sleeping ; let us have another tankard while we are awake — let us have another tankard ; for, ah, how charming a tankard looks when full !

“You must know, then, that I am very well descended : my ancestors have made some noise in the world ; for my mother cried oysters, and my father beat a drum : I am told we have even had some trumpeters in our family. Many a nobleman cannot show

so respectable a genealogy ; but that is neither here nor there. As I was their only child, my father designed to breed me up to his own employment, which was that of a drummer to a puppet-show. Thus the whole employment of my younger years was that of interpreter to Punch, and King Solomon in all his glory. But though my father was very fond of instructing me in beating all the marches and points of war, I made no very great progress, because I naturally had no ear for music ; so at the age of fifteen I went and listed for a soldier. As I had ever hated beating a drum, so I soon found that I disliked carrying a musket also ; neither the one trade nor the other was to my taste, for I was by nature fond of being a gentleman : besides, I was obliged to obey my captain : he has his will, I have mine, and you have yours ; now I very reasonably concluded, that it was much more comfortable for a man to obey his own will than another's.

“The life of a soldier soon, therefore, gave me the spleen. I asked leave to quit the service ; but as I was tall and strong, my captain thanked me for my kind intention, and said, because he had a regard for me, we should not part. I wrote to my father a very dismal penitent letter, and desired that he would raise money to pay for my discharge ; but the good man was as fond of drinking as I was, — sir, my service to you, — and those who are fond of drinking never pay for other people's discharges ; in short, he never answered my letter. What could be done ? If I have not money, said I to myself, to pay for my discharge,

I must find an equivalent some other way ; and that must be by running away. I deserted, and that answered my purpose every bit as well as if I had bought my discharge.

“ Well, I was now fairly rid of my military employment ; I sold my soldier’s clothes, bought worse, and, in order not to be overtaken, took the most unfrequented roads possible. One evening, as I was entering a village, I perceived a man, whom I afterwards found to be the curate of the parish, thrown from his horse in a miry road, and almost smothered in the mud. He desired my assistance ; I gave it, and drew him out with some difficulty. He thanked me for my trouble, and was going off ; but I followed him home, for I loved always to have a man thank me at his own door. The curate asked an hundred questions : as, whose son I was ; from whence I came ; and whether I would be faithful. I answered him greatly to his satisfaction, and gave myself one of the best characters in the world for sobriety, — sir, I have the honor of drinking your health, — discretion, and fidelity. To make a long story short, he wanted a servant, and hired me. With him I lived but two months ; we did not much like each other : I was fond of eating, and he gave me but little to eat ; I loved a pretty girl, and the old woman, my fellow-servant, was ill-natured and ugly. As they endeavored to starve me between them, I made a pious resolution to prevent their committing murder : I stole the eggs as soon as they were laid ; I emptied every unfinished bottle that

I could lay my hands on ; whatever eatable came in my way was sure to disappear, — in short, they found I would not do ; so I was discharged one morning, and paid three shillings and sixpence for two months' wages.

“While my money was getting ready, I employed myself in making preparations for my departure. Two hens were hatching in an outhouse — I went and took the eggs from habit ; and not to separate the parents from the children, I lodged hens and all in my knapsack. After this piece of frugality, I returned to receive my money, and with my knapsack on my back, and a staff in my hand, I bade adieu, with tears in my eyes, to my old benefactor. I had not gone far from the house when I heard behind me the cry of ‘Stop thief!’ but this only increased my despatch : it would have been foolish to stop, as I knew the voice could not be levelled at me — But hold, I think I passed those two months at the curate's without drinking. Come, the times are dry, and may this be my poison, if ever I spent two more pious, stupid months in all my life !

“Well, after travelling some days, whom should I light upon but a company of strolling players ! The moment I saw them at a distance my heart warmed to them ; I had a sort of natural love for every thing of the vagabond order. They were employed in settling their baggage, which had been overturned in a narrow way ; I offered my assistance, which they accepted ; and we soon became so well acquainted, that they took

me as a servant. This was a paradise to me : they sang, danced, drank, eat, and travelled, all at the same time. By the blood of the Mirabels, I thought I had never lived till then ; I grew as merry as a grig, and laughed at every word that was spoken. They liked me as much as I liked them : I was a very good figure, as you may see ; and though I was poor, I was not modest.

“I love a stragglng life above all things in the world ; sometimes good, sometimes bad ; to be warm to-day, and cold to-morrow ; to eat when one can get it, and drink when—the tankard is out—it stands before me. We arrived that evening at Tenterden, and took a large room at the Greyhound, where we resolved to exhibit *Romeo and Juliet*, with the funeral procession, the grave, and the garden scene. *Romeo* was to be performed by a gentleman from the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane ; *Juliet* by a lady who had never appeared on any stage before ; and I was to snuff the candles ; all excellent in our way. We had figures enough, but the difficulty was to dress them. The same coat that served *Romeo*, turned with the blue lining outwards, served for his friend *Mercutio* ; a large piece of crape sufficed at once for *Juliet*’s petticoat and pall ; a pestle and mortar, from a neighboring apothecary’s, answered all the purposes of a bell ; and our landlord’s own family, wrapped in white sheets, served to fill up the procession. In short, there were but three figures among us that might be said to be dressed with any propriety,—I mean the nurse, the

starved apothecary, and myself. Our performance gave universal satisfaction: the whole audience were enchanted with our powers.

“There is one rule by which a strolling player may be ever secure of success; that is, in our theatrical way of expressing it, to make a great deal of the character. To speak and act as in common life is not playing, nor is it what people come to see: natural speaking, like sweet wine, runs glibly over the palate, and scarce leaves any taste behind it; but being high in a part resembles vinegar, which grates upon the taste, and one feels it while he is drinking. To please in town or country the way is to cry, wring, cringe into attitudes, mark the emphasis, slap the pockets, and labor like one in the falling sickness: that is the way to work for applause — that is the way to gain it.

“As we received much reputation for our skill on this first exhibition, it was but natural for me to ascribe part of the success to myself: I snuffed the candles, and let me tell you, that without a candle-snuffer the piece would lose half its embellishments. In this manner we continued a fortnight, and drew tolerable houses; but the evening before our intended departure we gave out our very best piece, in which all our strength was to be exerted. We had great expectations from this, and even doubled our prices, when, behold, one of the principal actors fell ill of a violent fever. This was a stroke like thunder to our little company: they were resolved to go in a body, to scold the man for falling sick at so inconvenient a time, and

that, too, of a disorder that threatened to be expensive : I seized the moment, and offered to act the part myself in his stead. The case was desperate : they accepted my offer : and I accordingly sat down, with the part in my hand, and a tankard before me, — sir, your health, — and studied the character, which was to be rehearsed the next day, and played soon after.

“I found my memory excessively helped by drinking : I learned my part with astonishing rapidity, and bade adieu to snuffing candles ever after. I found that Nature had designed me for more noble employments, and I was resolved to take her when in the humor. We got together, in order to rehearse ; and I informed my companions — masters now no longer — of the surprising change I felt within me. ‘Let the sick man,’ said I, ‘be under no uneasiness to get well again ; I’ll fill his place to universal satisfaction : he may even die if he thinks proper ; I’ll engage that he shall never be missed.’ I rehearsed before them, strutted, ranted, and received applause. They soon gave out that a new actor of eminence was to appear, and immediately all the genteel places were bespoke. Before I ascended the stage, however, I concluded within myself, that as I brought money to the house I ought to have my share in the profits. ‘Gentlemen,’ said I, addressing our company, ‘I don’t pretend to direct you ; far be it from me to treat you with so much ingratitude : you have published my name in the bills with the utmost good nature, and, as affairs stand, cannot act without me : so, gentlemen, to show

you my gratitude, I expect to be paid for my acting as much as any of you ; otherwise I declare off ; I'll banish my snuffers and clip candles as usual.' This was a very disagreeable proposal, but they found it was impossible to refuse it ; it was irresistible, — it was adamant ; they consented, and I went on in *King Bajazet* — my frowning brows bound with a stocking stuffed into a turban, while on my captived arms I brandished a jack-chain. Nature seemed to have fitted me for the part ; I was tall, and had a loud voice ; my very entrance excited universal applause ; I looked round on the audience with a smile, and made a most low and graceful bow, for that is the rule among us. As it was a very passionate part, I invigorated my spirits with three full glasses — the tankard is almost out — of brandy. By *Alla !* it is almost inconceivable how I went through it ; *Tamerlane* was but a fool to me ; though he was sometimes loud enough too, yet I was still louder than he ; but then, besides, I had attitudes in abundance : in general I kept my arms folded up thus, upon the pit of my stomach ; it is the way at *Drury-lane*, and has always a fine effect. The tankard would sink to the bottom before I could get through the whole of my merits : in short, I came off like a prodigy ; and such was my success, that I could ravish the laurels even from a sirloin of beef. The principal gentlemen and ladies of the town came to me, after the play was over, to compliment me upon my success : one praised my voice, another my person. 'Upon my word,' says the Squire's lady, 'he will make

one of the finest actors in Europe ; I say it, and I think I am something of a judge.' Praise in the beginning is agreeable enough, and we receive it as a favor ; but when it comes in great quantities, we regard it only as a debt, which nothing but our merit could extort : instead of thanking them, I internally applauded myself. We were desired to give our piece a second time : we obeyed : and I was applauded even more than before.

"At last we left the town, in order to be at a horse-race at some distance from thence. I shall never think of Tenterden without tears of gratitude and respect. The ladies and gentlemen there, take my word for it, are very good judges of plays and actors. — Come, let us drink their healths, if you please, sir. We quitted the town, I say ; and there was a wide difference between my coming in and going out : I entered the town a candle-snuffer, and I quitted it an hero ! — Such is the world : little to-day, and great to-morrow. I could say a great deal more upon that subject — something truly sublime, upon the ups and downs of fortune ; but it would give us both the spleen, and so I shall pass it over.

"The races were ended before we arrived at the next town, which was no small disappointment to our company ; however, we were resolved to take all we could get. I played capital characters there too, and came off with my usual brilliancy. I sincerely believe I should have been the first actor in Europe, had my growing merit been properly cultivated ; but there

came an unkindly frost, which nipped me in the bud, and levelled me once more down to the common standard of humanity. I played Sir Harry Wildair ; all the country ladies were charmed : if I but drew out my snuff-box, the whole house was in a roar of rapture ; when I exercised my cudgel, I thought they would have fallen into convulsions.

“There was here a lady who had received an education of nine months in London, and this gave her pretensions to taste, which rendered her the indisputable mistress of the ceremonies wherever she came. She was informed of my merits ; everybody praised me, yet she refused at first going to see me perform. She could not conceive, she said, anything but stuff from a stroller ; talked something in praise of Garrick, and amazed the ladies with her skill in enunciations, tones, and cadences. She was at last, however, prevailed upon to go ; and it was privately intimated to me what a judge was to be present at my next exhibition. However, no way intimidated, I came on in Sir Harry, one hand stuck in my breeches, and the other in my bosom, as usual at Drury-lane ; but instead of looking at me, I perceived the whole audience had their eyes turned upon the lady who had been nine months in London ; from her they expected the decision which was to secure the general’s truncheon in my hand, or sink me down into a theatrical letter-carrier. I opened my snuff-box, took snuff ; the lady was solemn, and so were the rest : I broke my cudgel on Alderman Smuggler’s back ; still gloomy,

melancholy all — the lady groaned and shrugged her shoulders : I attempted, by laughing myself, to excite at least a smile ; but the devil a cheek could I perceive wrinkled into sympathy : I found it would not do. All my good-humor now became forced ; my laughter was converted into hysteric grinning ; and while I pretended spirits, my eye showed the agony of my heart : in short, the lady came with an intention to be displeased, and displeased she was ; my fame expired ; I am here, and — the tankard is no more ! ”

A DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS CLUBS.

I REMEMBER to have read in some philosopher (I believe in Tom Brown's works), that, let a man's character, sentiments, or complexion, be what they will, he can find company in London to match them. If he be splenetic, he may every day meet companions on the seats in St. James's Park, with whose groans he may mix his own, and pathetically talk of the weather. If he be passionate, he may vent his rage among the old orators at Slaughter's Coffee-house, and damn the nation, because it keeps him from starving. If he be phlegmatic, he may sit in silence at the Humdrum Club in Ivy Lane ; and, if actually mad, he may find very good company in Moorfields, either at Bedlam or the Foundery, ready to cultivate a nearer acquaintance.

But, although such as have a knowledge of the town may easily class themselves with tempers congenial to their own, a countryman who comes to live in London finds nothing more difficult. With regard to myself, none ever tried with more assiduity, or came off with such indifferent success. I spent a whole season in

the search, during which time my name has been enrolled in societies, lodges, convocations, and meetings, without number. To some I was introduced by a friend, to others invited by an advertisement : to these I introduced myself, and to those I changed my name to gain admittance. In short, no coquette was ever more solicitous to match her ribbons to her complexion, than I to suit my club to my temper ; for I was too obstinate to bring my temper to conform to it.

The first club I entered, upon coming to town, was that of the Choice Spirits. The name was entirely suited to my taste, — I was a lover of mirth, good-humor, and even sometimes of fun, from my childhood.

As no other passport was requisite but the payment of two shillings at the door, I introduced myself without farther ceremony to the members, who were already assembled, and had for some time begun upon business. The Grand, with a mallet in his hand, presided at the head of the table. I could not avoid, upon my entrance, making use of all my skill in physiognomy, in order to discover that superiority of genius in men who had taken a title so superior to the rest of mankind. I expected to see the lines of every face marked with strong thinking ; but though I had some skill in this science, I could for my life discover nothing but a pert simpler, fat, or profound stupidity.

My speculations were soon interrupted by the Grand, who had knocked down Mr. Spriggins for a song. I was upon this whispered by one of the com-

pany who sat next me, that I should now see something touched off to a nicety, for Mr. Spriggins was going to give us "Mad Tom" in all its glory. Mr. Spriggins endeavored to excuse himself; for as he was to act a madman and a king, it was impossible to go through the part properly without a crown and chains. His excuses were overruled by a great majority, and with much vociferation. The president ordered up the jack-chain, and, instead of a crown, our performer covered his brows with an inverted jordan. After he had rattled his chain and shook his head, to the great delight of the whole company, he began his song. As I have heard few young fellows offer to sing in company that did not expose themselves, it was no great disappointment to me to find Mr. Spriggins among the number; however, not to seem an odd fish, I rose from my seat in rapture, cried out "Bravo! Encore!" and slapped the table as loud as any of the rest.

The gentleman who sat next me seemed highly pleased with my taste and the ardor of my approbation; and whispering, told me that I had suffered an immense loss, for had I come a few minutes sooner, I might have heard "Gee-ho Dobbin" sung in a tip-top manner by the pimple-nosed spirit at the president's right elbow; but he was evaporated before I came.

As I was expressing my uneasiness at this disappointment, I found the attention of the company employed upon a fat figure, who, with a voice more rough

than the Staffordshire giant's, was giving us the "Softly sweet in Lydian measure" of Alexander's Feast. After a short pause of admiration, to this succeeded a Welsh dialogue, with the humors of Teague and Taffy; after that came on "Old Jackson," with a story between every stanza: next was sung the "Dust Cart," and then "Solomon's Song." The glass begun now to circulate pretty freely; those who were silent when sober, would now be heard in their turn; every man had his song, and he saw no reason why he should not be heard as well as any of the rest: one begged to be heard while he gave "Death and the Lady" in high taste; another sang to a plate which he kept trundling on the edges. Nothing was now heard but singing; voice rose above voice, and the whole became one universal shout, when the landlord came to acquaint the company that the reckoning was drunk out. Rabelais calls the moments in which a reckoning is mentioned the most melancholy of our lives: never was so much noise so quickly quelled, as by this short but pathetic oration of our landlord. "Drunk out!" was echoed in a tone of discontent round the table: "drunk out already! that was very odd! that so much punch could be drunk out already—impossible!" The landlord, however, seeming resolved not to retreat from his first assurances, the company was dissolved, and a president chosen for the night ensuing.

A friend of mine, to whom I was complaining some time after the entertainment I have been describing, proposed to bring me to the club that he frequented,

which he fancied would suit the gravity of my temper exactly. "We have at the Muzzy Club," says he, "no riotous mirth nor awkward ribaldry ; no confusion or bawling ; all is conducted with wisdom and decency : besides, some of our members are worth forty thousand pounds — men of prudence and foresight every one of them : these are the proper acquaintance, and to such I will to-night introduce you." I was charmed at the proposal : to be acquainted with men worth forty thousand pounds, and to talk wisdom the whole night, were offers that threw me into rapture.

At seven o'clock I was accordingly introduced by my friend, not indeed to the company — for though I made my best bow, they seemed insensible of my approach — but to the table at which they were sitting. Upon my entering the room, I could not avoid feeling a secret veneration from the solemnity of the scene before me ; the members kept a profound silence, each with a pipe in his mouth, and a pewter pot in his hand, and with faces that might easily be construed into absolute wisdom. Happy society, thought I to myself, where the members think before they speak, deliver nothing rashly, but convey their thoughts to each other pregnant with meaning, and matured by reflection !

In this pleasing speculation I continued a full half-hour, expecting each moment that somebody would begin to open his mouth : every time the pipe was laid down I expected it was to speak ; but it was only to spit. At length, resolving to break the charm my-

self, and overcome their extreme diffidence — for to this I imputed their silence — I rubbed my hands, and, looking as wise as possible, observed that the nights began to grow a little coolish at this time of the year. This, as it was directed to none of the company in particular, none thought himself obliged to answer ; wherefore I continued still to rub my hands and look wise. My next effort was addressed to a gentleman who sat next me ; to whom I observed, that the beer was extremely good : my neighbor made no reply, but by a large puff of tobacco smoke.

I now began to be uneasy in this dumb society, till one of them a little relieved me, by observing, that bread had not risen these three weeks. “Ay,” says another, still keeping the pipe in his mouth, “that puts me in mind of a pleasant story about that — hem — very well ; you must know — but before I begin — sir, my service to you — where was I ?”

My next club goes by the name of the Harmonical Society ; probably from that love of order and friendship which every person commends in institutions of this nature. The landlord was himself the founder. The money spent is fourpence each ; and they sometimes whip for a double reckoning. To this club few recommendations are requisite, except the introductory fourpence, and my landlord’s good word, which, as he gains by it, he never refuses.

We all here talked and behaved as everybody else usually does on his club night ; we discussed the topic of the day, drank each other’s healths, snuffed the

candles with our fingers, and filled our pipes from the same plate of tobacco. The company saluted each other in the common manner: Mr. Bellows-mender hoped Mr. Currycomb-maker had not caught cold going home the last club night; and he returned the compliment by hoping that young Master Bellows-mender had got well again of the chin-cough. Dr. Twist told us a story of a parliament-man with whom he was intimately acquainted; while the bag-man, at the same time, was telling a better story of a noble lord with whom he could do any thing. A gentleman in a black wig and leather breeches, at t'other end of the table, was engaged in a long narrative of the Ghost in Cock Lane: he had read it in the papers of the day, and was telling it to some that sat next him, who could not read. Near him, Mr. Dibbins was disputing on the old subject of religion with a Jew pedler, over the table; while the president vainly knocked down Mr. Leathersides for a song. Besides the combinations of these voices, which I could hear altogether, and which formed an upper part to the concert, there were several others playing under parts by themselves, and endeavoring to fasten on some luckless neighbor's ear, who was himself bent upon the same design against some other.

We have often heard of the speech of a corporation, and this induced me to transcribe a speech of this club, taken in short-hand, word for word, as it was spoken by every member of the company. It may be necessary to observe, that the man who told of the

ghost had the loudest voice, and the longest story to tell, so that his continuing narrative filled every chasm in the conversation.

“So, sir, d’ye perceive me, the ghost giving three loud raps at the bed-post — Says my lord to me, my dear Smokeum, you know there is no man upon the face of the yearth for whom I have so high — A damnable false heretical opinion of all sound doctrine and good learning ; for I’ll tell it aloud, and spare not, that — Silence for a song ; Mr. Leathersides for a song — ‘ As I was a-walking upon the highway, I met a young damsel ’ — Then what brings you here ? says the parson to the ghost — Sanconiathon, Manetho, and Berosus — The whole way from Islington turnpike to Dog-house bar — Dam — As for Abel Drugger, sir, he’s damned low in it : my ’prentice boy has more of the gentleman than he — For murder will out one time or another ; and none but a ghost, you know, gentlemen, can — Damme, if I don’t ; for my friend, whom you know, gentlemen, and who is a parliament-man, a man of consequence, a dear honest creature, to be sure ; we were laughing last night at — Death and damnation upon all his posterity, by simple barely tasting — Sour grapes, as the fox said once when he could not reach them : and I’ll, I’ll tell you a story about that that will make you burst your sides with laughing : a fox once — Will nobody listen to the song — ‘ As I was a-walking upon the highway, I met a young damsel both buxom and gay,’ — No ghost, gentlemen, can be murdered ; nor did I ever hear but of

one ghost killed in all my life, and that was stabbed in the belly with a — My blood and soul if I don't — Mr. Bellows-mender, I have the honor of drinking your very good health — Blast me if I do — dam — blood — bugs — fire — whiz — blid — tit — rat — trip" — The rest all riot, nonsense, and rapid confusion.

Were I to be angry at men for being fools, I could here find ample room for declamation ; but, alas ! I have been a fool myself ; and why should I be angry with them for being something so natural to every child of humanity ?

Fatigued with this society, I was introduced the following night to a club of fashion. On taking my place, I found the conversation sufficiently easy, and tolerably good-natured : for my Lord and Sir Paul were not yet arrived. I now thought myself completely fitted, and resolving to seek no farther, determined to take up my residence here for the winter ; while my temper began to open insensibly to the cheerfulness I saw diffused on every face in the room : but the delusion soon vanished, when the waiter came to apprise us that his Lordship and Sir Paul were just arrived.

From this moment all our felicity was at an end ; our new guests bustled into the room, and took their seats at the head of the table. Adieu, now, all confidence ! every creature strove who should most recommend himself to our members of distinction. Each seemed quite regardless of pleasing any but our new

guests ; and what before wore the appearance of friendship, was now turned into rivalry.

Yet I could not observe that, amidst all this flattery and obsequious attention, our great men took any notice of the rest of the company. Their whole discourse was addressed to each other. Sir Paul told his Lordship a long story of Moravia the Jew ; and his Lordship gave Sir Paul a very long account of his new method of managing silk-worms : he led him, and consequently the rest of the company, through all the stages of feeding, sunning, and hatching ; with an episode on mulberry-trees, a digression upon grass seeds, and a long parenthesis about his new postilion. In this manner we travelled on, wishing every story to be the last ; but all in vain :

Hills over hills, and Alps on Alps arose.

The last club in which I was enrolled a member was a society of moral philosophers, as they called themselves, who assembled twice a week, in order to show the absurdity of the present mode of religion, and establish a new one in its stead.

I found the members very warmly disputing when I arrived, not indeed about religion or ethics, but about who had neglected to lay down his preliminary sixpence upon entering the room. The president swore that he had laid his own down, and so swore all the company.

During this contest I had an opportunity of observ-

ing the laws, and also the members, of the society. The president, who had been, as I was told, lately a bankrupt, was a tall pale figure, with a long black wig ; the next to him was dressed in a large white wig and a black cravat ; a third, by the brownness of complexion, seemed a native of Jamaica ; and a fourth, by his hue, appeared to be a blacksmith. But their rules will give the most just idea of their learning and principles.

I. We, being a laudable society of moral philosophers, intends to dispute twice a week about religion and priestcraft ; leaving behind us old wives' tales, and following good learning and sound sense : and if so be, that any other persons has a mind to be of the society, they shall be entitled so to do, upon paying the sum of three shillings, to be spent by the company in punch.

II. That no member get drunk before nine of the clock, upon pain of forfeiting threepence, to be spent by the company in punch.

III. That, as members are sometimes apt to go away without paying, every person shall pay sixpence upon his entering the room ; and all disputes shall be settled by a majority ; and all fines shall be paid in punch.

IV. That sixpence shall be every night given to the president, in order to buy books of learning for the good of the society : the president has already put himself to a good deal of expense in buying books for the club ; particularly, the works of Tully, Socrates, and Cicero, which he will soon read to the society.

V. All them who brings a new argument against religion, and who being a philosopher and a man of learning, as the rest of us is, shall be admitted to the freedom of the society, upon paying sixpence only, to be spent in punch.

VI. Whenever we are to have an extraordinary meeting, it shall be advertised by some outlandish name in the newspapers.

SAUNDERS MACWILD, *President.*

ANTHONY BLEWIT, *Vice-President.*

his  mark.

WILLIAM TURPIN, *Secretary.*

THE TRICKS OF GAMESTERS.

*A letter from Mr. *** in Tunbridge to Lord**** in London, found among the papers of Mr. Nash, and prepared by him for the press.*

“MY LORD,—What I foresaw has arrived; poor Jenners, after losing all his fortune, has shot himself through the head. His losses to Bland were considerable, and his playing soon after with Spedding contributed to hasten his ruin. No man was ever more enamoured of play, or understood it less. At whatever game he ventured his money, he was most usually the dupe, and still foolishly attributed to his bad luck those misfortunes that entirely proceeded from his want of judgment.

“After finding that he had brought on himself irreparable indigence and contempt, his temper, formerly so sprightly, began to grow gloomy and unequal: he grew more fond of solitude, and more liable to take offence at supposed injuries; in short, for a week before he shot himself, his friends were of opinion that he meditated some such horrid design. He was found in his chamber fallen on the floor, the bullet having

glanced on the bone, and lodged behind his right eye.

“You remember, my lord, what a charming fellow this deluded man was once ; how benevolent, just, temperate, and every way virtuous. The only faults of his mind arose from motives of humanity : he was too easy, credulous, and good-natured, and unable to resist temptation, when recommended by the voice of friendship. These foibles the vicious and the needy soon perceived, and what was at first a weakness they soon perverted into guilt ; he became a gamester, and continued the infamous profession till he could support the miseries brought with it no longer.

“I have often been not a little concerned to see the first introduction of a young man of fortune to the gaming-table. With what eagerness his company is courted by the whole fraternity of sharpers ; how they find out his most latent wishes, in order to make way to his affections by gratifying them, and continue to hang upon him with the meanest degree of condescension. The youthful dupe, no way suspecting, imagines himself surrounded by friends and gentlemen, and, incapable of even suspecting that men of such seeming good sense and so genteel an appearance should deviate from the laws of honor, walks into the snare, nor is he undeceived till schooled by the severity of experience.

“As I suppose no man would be a gamester unless he hoped to win, so I fancy it would be easy to reclaim him, if he was once effectually convinced, that by con-

tinuing to play he must certainly lose. Permit me, my lord, to attempt this task, and to show, that no young gentleman by a year's run of play, and in a mixed company, can possibly be a gainer.

“Let me suppose, in the first place, that the chances on both sides are equal, that there are no marked cards, no pinching, shuffling, nor hiding; let me suppose that the players also have no advantage of each other in point of judgment, and still further let me grant, that the party is only formed at home, without going to the usual expensive places of resort frequented by gamesters. Even with all these circumstances in the young gamester's favor, it is evident he cannot be a gainer. With equal players, after a year's continuance of any particular game it will be found that, whatever has been played for, the winnings on either side are very inconsiderable, and most commonly nothing at all. Here then is a year's anxiety, pain, jarring, and suspense, and nothing gained; were the parties to sit down and professedly play for nothing, they would condemn the proposal; they would call it trifling away time, and one of the most insipid amusements in nature; yet, in fact, how do equal players differ? It is allowed that little or nothing can be gained; but much is lost; our youth, our time, those moments that may be laid out in pleasure or improvement, are foolishly squandered away in tossing cards, fretting at ill-luck, or, even with a run of luck in our favor, fretting that our winnings are so small.

“I have now stated gaming in that point of view

in which it is alone defensible, as a commerce carried on with equal advantage and loss to either party, and it appears, that the loss is great, and the advantage but small. But let me suppose the players not to be equal, but the superiority of judgment in our own favor. A person who plays under this conviction, however, must give up all pretensions to the approbation of his own mind, and is guilty of as much injustice as the thief who robbed a blind man because he knew he could not swear to his person.

“But, in fact, when I allowed the superiority of skill on the young beginner’s side, I only granted an impossibility. Skill in gaming, like skill in making a watch, can only be acquired by long and painful industry. The most sagacious youth alive was never taught at once all the arts and all the niceties of gaming. Every passion must be schooled by long habit into caution and phlegm ; the very countenance must be taught proper discipline ; and he who would practise this art with success, must practise on his own constitution all the severities of a martyr, without any expectation of the reward. It is evident, therefore, every beginner must be a dupe, and can only be expected to learn his trade by losses, disappointments, and dishonor.

“If a young gentleman, therefore, begins to game, the commencements are sure to be to his disadvantage ; and all that he can promise himself is, that the company he keeps, though superior in skill, are above taking advantage of his ignorance, and unacquainted

with any sinister arts to correct fortune. But this, however, is but a poor hope at best, and, what is worse, most frequently a false one. In general, I might almost have said always, those who live by gaming are not beholden to chance alone for their support, but take every advantage which they can practise without danger of detection. I know many are apt to say, and I have once said so myself, that after I have shuffled the cards, it is not in the power of a sharper to pack them ; but at present I can confidently assure your lordship that such reasoners are deceived. I have seen men, both in Paris, the Hague, and London, who, after three deals, could give whatever hands they pleased to all the company. However, the usual way with sharpers is to correct fortune thus but once in a night, and to play in other respects without blunder or mistake, and a perseverance in this practice always balances the year in their favor.

“It is impossible to enumerate all the tricks and arts practised upon cards ; few but have seen those bungling poor fellows who go about at coffee-houses, perform their clumsy feats, and yet, indifferently as they are versed in the trade, they often deceive us. When such as these are possessed of so much art, what must not those be, who have been bred up to gaming from their infancy, whose hands are not like those mentioned above, rendered callous by labor, who have continual practice in the trade of deceiving, and where the eye of the spectator is less upon its guard.

“Let the young beginner only reflect by what a variety of methods it is possible to cheat him, and perhaps it will check his confidence. His antagonists may act by signs and confederacy, and this he can never detect; they may cut to a particular card after three or four hands have gone about, either by having that card pinched, or broader than the rest, or by having an exceeding fine wire thrust between the folds of the paper, and just peeping out at the edge. Or the cards may be chalked with particular marks which none but the sharper can understand, or a new pack may be slipped in at a proper opportunity. I have known myself, in Paris, a fellow thus detected with a tin case, containing two packs of cards, concealed within his shirt sleeve, and which, by means of a spring, threw the cards ready packed into his hands. These and an hundred other arts may be practised with impunity and escape detection.

“The great error lies in imagining every fellow with a laced coat to be a gentleman. The address and transient behavior of a man of breeding are easily acquired, and none are better qualified than gamesters in this respect. At first, their complaisance, civility, and apparent honor is pleasing; but upon examination few of them will be found to have their minds sufficiently stored with any of the more refined accomplishments which truly characterize the man of breeding. This will commonly serve as a criterion to distinguish them, though there are other marks which every young gentleman of fortune should be apprised

of. A sharper, when he plays, generally handles and deals the cards awkwardly like a bungler; he advances his bets by degrees, and keeps his antagonist in spirits by small advantages and alternate success at the beginning: to show all his force at once, would but frighten the bird he intends to decoy; he talks of honor and virtue, and his being a gentleman, and that he knows great men, and mentions his coal-mines, and his estate in the country; he is totally divested of that masculine confidence which is the attendant of real fortune; he turns, yields, assents, smiles, as he hopes will be most pleasing to his destined prey; he is afraid of meeting a shabby acquaintance, particularly if in better company; as he grows richer he wears finer clothes; and if ever he is seen in an undress, it is most probable he is without money; so that seeing a gamester growing finer each day, is a certain symptom of his success.

“The young gentleman who plays with such men for considerable sums, is sure to be undone, and yet we seldom see even the rook himself make a fortune. A life of gaming must necessarily be a life of extravagance; parties of this kind are formed in houses where the whole profits are consumed, and while those who play mutually ruin each other, they only who keep the house or the table acquire fortunes. Thus gaming may readily ruin a fortune, but has seldom been found to retrieve it. The wealth which has been acquired with industry and hazard, and preserved for ages by prudence and foresight, is swept away on a sudden;

and when a besieging sharper sits down before an estate, the property is often transferred in less time than the writings can be drawn to secure the possession. The neglect of business, and the extravagance of a mind which has been taught to covet precarious possession, bring on premature destruction: though poverty may fetch a compass and go somewhat about, yet will it reach the gamester at last; and though his ruin be slow, yet it is certain.

“A thousand instances could be given of the fatal tendency of this passion, which first impoverishes the mind, and then perverts the understanding. Permit me to mention one, not caught from report, or dressed up by fancy, but such as has actually fallen under my own observation, and of the truth of which I beg your lordship may rest satisfied.

“At Tunbridge, in the year 1715, Mr. J. Hedges made a very brilliant appearance. He had been married about two years to a young lady of great beauty and large fortune; they had one child, a boy, on whom they bestowed all that affection which they could spare from each other. He knew nothing of gaming, nor seemed to have the least passion for play; but he was unacquainted with his own heart; he began by degrees to bet at the tables for trifling sums, and his soul took fire at the prospect of immediate gain: he was soon surrounded with sharpers, who with calmness lay in ambush for his fortune, and coolly took advantage of the precipitancy of his passions.

“His lady perceived the ruin of her family approach-

ing, but at first without being able to form any scheme to prevent it. She advised with his brother, who at that time was possessed of a small fellowship in Cambridge. It was easily seen that whatever took the lead in her husband's mind, seemed to be there fixed unalterably ; it was determined, therefore, to let him pursue fortune, but previously take measures to prevent the pursuit being fatal.

“Accordingly, every night this gentleman was a constant attender at the hazard tables ; he understood neither the arts of sharpers nor even the allowed strokes of a connoisseur, yet still he played. The consequence is obvious : he lost his estate, his equipage, his wife's jewels, and every other movable that could be parted with, except a repeating watch. His agony upon this occasion was inexpressible ; he was even mean enough to ask a gentleman, who sat near, to lend him a few pieces, in order to turn his fortune ; but this prudent gamester, who plainly saw there were no expectations of being repaid, refused to lend a farthing, alleging a former resolution against lending. Hedges was at last furious with the continuance of ill-success, and pulling out his watch, asked if any person in company would set him sixty guineas upon it : the company were silent ; he then demanded fifty ; still no answer : he sunk to forty, thirty, twenty ; finding the company still without answering, he cried out, ‘By G—d it shall never go for less,’ and dashed it against the floor, at the same time attempting to dash out his brains against the marble chimney-piece.

“This last act of desperation immediately excited the attention of the whole company ; they instantly gathered round, and prevented the effects of his passion ; and after he again became cool, he was permitted to return home, with sullen discontent, to his wife. Upon his entering her apartment, she received him with her usual tenderness and satisfaction ; while he answered her caresses with contempt and severity ; his disposition being quite altered with his misfortunes. ‘But, my dear Jemmy,’ says his wife, ‘perhaps you don’t know the news I have to tell : my mamma’s old uncle is dead ; the messenger is now in the house, and you know his estate is settled upon you.’ This account seemed only to increase his agony, and looking angrily at her, he cried, ‘There you lie, my dear, his estate is not settled upon me.’ — ‘I beg your pardon,’ says she, ‘I really thought it was ; at least you have always told me so.’ ‘No,’ returned he, ‘as sure as you and I are to be miserable here, and our children beggars hereafter, I have sold the reversion of it this day, and have lost every farthing I got for it at the hazard table.’ ‘What, all !’ replied the lady. ‘Yes, every farthing,’ returned he, ‘and I owe a thousand pounds more than I have to pay.’ Thus speaking, he took a few frantic steps across the room. When the lady had a little enjoyed his perplexity : ‘No, my dear,’ cried she, ‘you have lost but a trifle, and you owe nothing ; our brother and I have taken care to prevent the effects of your rashness, and are actually the persons who have won your fortune : we employed proper persons

for this purpose, who brought their winnings to me ; your money, your equipage, are in my possession, and here I return them to you, from whom they were unjustly taken. I only ask permission to keep my jewels, and to keep you, my greatest jewel, from such dangers for the future.' Her prudence had the proper effect ; he ever after retained a sense of his former follies, and never played for the smallest sums, even for amusement.

"Not less than three persons in one day fell a sacrifice at Bath to this destructive passion. Two gentlemen fought a duel, in which one was killed. and the other desperately wounded ; and a youth of great expectation and excellent disposition, at the same time ended his own life by a pistol. If there be any state that deserves pity, it must be that of a gamester ; but the state of a dying gamester is of all situations the most deplorable.

"There is another argument which your lordship, I fancy, will not entirely despise : beauty, my lord, I own is at best but a trifle, but such as it is, I fancy few would willingly part with what little they have. A man with a healthful complexion, how great a philosopher soever he be, would not willingly exchange it for a sallow hectic phiz, pale eyes, and a sharp wrinkled visage. I entreat you only to examine the faces of all the noted gamblers round one of our public tables ; have you ever seen anything more haggard, pinched, and miserable ? And it is but natural that it should be so. The succession of passions flush the cheek with red, and all such flushings are ever succeeded by

consequent paleness ; so that a gamester contracts the sickly hue of a student, while he is only acquiring the stupidity of a fool.

“Your good sense, my lord, I have often had an occasion of knowing, yet how miserable is it to be in a set of company where the most sensible is ever the least skilful ; your footman, with a little instruction, would, I dare venture to affirm, make a better and more successful gamester than you. Want of passions, and low cunning, are the two great arts ; and it is peculiar to this science alone, that they who have the greatest passion for it, are of all others the most unfit to practise it.

“Of all the men I ever knew, Spedding was the greatest blockhead, and yet the best gamester ; he saw almost intuitively the advantage on either side, and ever took it ; he could calculate the odds in a moment, and decide upon the merits of a cock or a horse, better than any man in England ; in short, he was such an adept in gaming, that he brought it up to a pitch of sublimity it had never attained before ; yet, with all this, Spedding could not write his own name. What he died worth I cannot tell, but of this I am certain, he might have possessed a ministerial estate, and that won from men famed for their sense, literature, and patriotism.

“If, after this description, your lordship is yet resolved to hazard your fortune at gaming, I beg you would advert to the situation of an old and luckless gamester. Perhaps there is not in nature a more

deplorable being : his character is too well marked, he is too well known to be trusted. A man that has been often a bankrupt, and renewed trade upon low compositions, may as well expect extensive credit as such a man. His reputation is blasted : his constitution worn, by the extravagance and ill hours of his profession ; he is now incapable of alluring his dupes, and, like a superannuated savage of the forest, he is starved for want of vigor to hunt after prey.

“Thus gaming is the source of poverty, and still worse, the parent of infamy and vice. It is an inlet to debauchery, for the money thus acquired is but little valued. Every gamester is a rake, and his morals worse than his mystery. It is his interest to be exemplary in every scene of debauchery ; his prey is to be courted with every guilty pleasure ; but these are to be changed, repeated, and embellished, in order to employ his imagination, while his reason is kept asleep ; a young mind is apt to shrink at the prospect of ruin ; care must be taken to harden his courage, and make him keep his rank ; he must be either found a libertine, or he must be made one. And when a man has parted with his money like a fool, he generally sends his conscience after it like a villain, and the nearer he is to the brink of destruction, the fonder does he grow of ruin.

“Your friend and mine, my lord, had been thus driven to the last reserve, for he found it impossible to disentangle his affairs, and look the world in the face ; impatience at length threw him into the abyss

he feared, and life became a burthen, because he feared to die. But I own that play is not always attended with such tragical circumstances ; some have had courage to survive their losses, and go on content with beggary ; and sure those misfortunes which are of our own production, are of all others most pungent. To see such a poor disbanded being an unwelcome guest at every table, and often flapped off like a fly, is affecting ; in this case the closest alliance is forgotten, and contempt is too strong for the ties of blood to unbind.

“ But, however fatal this passion may be in its consequence, none allures so much in the beginning ; the person once listed as a gamester, if not soon reclaimed, pursues it through his whole life ; no loss can retard, no danger awaken him to common sense ; nothing can terminate his career but want of money to play, or of honor to be trusted.

“ Among the number of my acquaintance, I knew but of two who succeeded by gaming ; the one a phlegmatic, heavy man, who would have made a fortune in whatever way of life he happened to be placed ; the other who had lost a fine estate in his youth by play, and retrieved a greater at the age of sixty-five, when he might be justly said to be past the power of enjoying it. One or two successful gamesters are thus set up in an age to allure the young beginner ; we all regard such as the highest prize in a lottery, unmindful of the numerous losses that go to the accumulation of such infrequent success.

“Yet I would not be so morose as to refuse your youth all kinds of play ; the innocent amusements of a family must often be indulged, and cards allowed to supply the intervals of more real pleasure ; but the sum played for in such cases should always be a trifle ; something to call up attention, but not engage the passions. The usual excuse for laying large sums is, to make the players attend to their game ; but, in fact, he that plays only for shillings will mind his cards equally well with him that bets guineas ; for the mind habituated to stake large sums, will consider them as trifles at last ; and if one shilling could not exclude indifference at first, neither will an hundred in the end.

I have often asked myself, how it is possible that he who is possessed of competence, can ever be induced to make it precarious by beginning play with the odds against him ; for wherever he goes to sport his money, he will find himself over-matched and cheated. Either at White’s, Newmarket, the Tennis Court, the Cock Pit, or the Billiard Table, he will find numbers who have no other resource but their acquisitions there ; and if such men live like gentlemen, he may readily conclude it must be on the spoils of his fortune, or the fortunes of ill-judging men like himself. Was he to attend but a moment to their manner of betting at those places, he would readily find the gamester seldom proposing bets but with the advantage in his own favor. A man of honor continues to lay on the side on which he first won ; but gamesters shift, change,

lie upon the lurch, and take every advantage, either of our ignorance or neglect.

“In short, my lord, if a man designs to lay out his fortune in quest of pleasure, the gaming table is, of all other places, that where he can have least for his money. The company are superficial, extravagant, and unentertaining; the conversation flat, debauched, and absurd; the hour unnatural and fatiguing; the anxiety of losing is greater than the pleasure of winning; friendship must be banished from that society the members of which are intent only on ruining each other; every other improvement, either in knowledge or virtue, can scarce find room in that breast which is possessed by the spirit of play; the spirits become vapid, the constitution is enfeebled, the complexion grows pale, till, in the end, the mind, body, friends, fortune, and even the hopes of futurity sink together! Happy, if Nature terminates the scene, and neither justice nor suicide are called in to accelerate her tardy approach. I am, my lord, etc.”

MR. FUDGE, THE PUBLISHER.

As I was yesterday seated at breakfast over a pensive dish of tea, my meditations were interrupted by my old friend and companion, who introduced a stranger, dressed pretty much like himself. The gentleman made several apologies for his visit, begged of me to impute his intrusion to the sincerity of his respect and the warmth of his curiosity.

As I am very suspicious of my company when I find them very civil without any apparent reason, I answered the stranger's caresses at first with reserve; which my friend perceiving, instantly let me into my visitant's trade and character, asking Mr. Fudge whether he had lately published anything new? I now conjectured that my guest was no other than a bookseller, and his answer confirmed my suspicions.

"Excuse me, sir," says he, "it is not the season; books have their time as well as cucumbers. I would no more bring out a new work in summer, than I would sell pork in the dogdays. Nothing in my way goes off in summer, except very light goods indeed. A review, a magazine, or a session's paper, may amuse a summer reader; but all our stock of

value we reserve for a spring and winter trade." — "I must confess, sir," says I, "a curiosity to know what you call a valuable stock, which can only bear a winter perusal." — "Sir," replied the bookseller, "it is not my way to cry up my own goods ; but, without exaggeration, I will venture to show with any of the trade : my books at least have the peculiar advantage of being always new ; and it is my way to clear off my old to the trunk-makers every season. I have ten new title-pages now about me, which only want books to be added to make them the finest things in nature. Others may pretend to direct the vulgar ; but that is not my way ; I always let the vulgar direct me ; wherever popular clamor arises, I always echo the million. For instance, should the people in general say that such a man is a rogue, I instantly give orders to set him down in print a villain ; thus every man buys the book, not to learn new sentiments, but to have the pleasure of seeing his own reflected." — "But, sir," interrupted I, "you speak as if you yourself wrote the books you published ; may I be so bold as to ask a sight of some of those intended publications which are shortly to surprise the world ?" — "As to that, sir," replied the talkative bookseller, "I only draw out the plans myself ; and though I am very cautious of communicating them to any, yet, as in the end I have a favor to ask, you shall see a few of them. Here, sir, here they are ; diamonds of the first water, I assure you. *Imprimis*, a translation of several medical precepts for the use of such physicians as do not under-

stand Latin. *Item*, the young clergyman's art of placing patches regularly, with a dissertation on the different manners of smiling without distorting the face. *Item*, the whole art of love made perfectly easy, by a broker of Change Alley. *Item*, the proper manner of cutting blacklead pencils, and making crayons, by the Right Hon. the Earl of ——. *Item*, the muster-master-general, or the review of reviews." — "Sir," cried I, interrupting him, "my curiosity with regard to title-pages is satisfied; I should be glad to see some longer manuscript, a history or an epic poem." — "Bless me," cries the man of industry, "now you speak of an epic poem, you shall see an excellent farce. Here it is; dip into it where you will, it will be found replete with true modern humor. Strokes, sir; it is filled with strokes of wit and satire in every line." — "Do you call these dashes of the pen strokes?" replied I; "for I must confess I can see no other." — "And pray, sir," returned he, "what do you call them? Do you see anything good now-a-days, that is not filled with strokes — and dashes? — Sir, a well-placed dash makes half the wit of our writers of modern humor. I bought a piece last season that had no other merit upon earth than nine hundred and ninety-five breaks, seventy-two ha-ha's, three good things, and a garter. And yet it played off, and bounced, and cracked, and made more sport than a firework." — "I fancy, then, sir, you were a considerable gainer?" — "It must be owned the piece did pay; but, upon the whole, I cannot much boast of last

winter's success : I gained by two murders ; but then I lost by an ill-timed charity sermon. I was a considerable sufferer by my Direct Road to an Estate, but the Infernal Guide brought me up again. Ah, sir, that was a piece touched off by the hand of a master ; filled with good things from one end to the other. The author had nothing but the jest in view ; no dull moral lurking beneath, nor ill-natured satire to sour the reader's good-humor ; he wisely considered, that moral and humor at the same time were quite overdoing the business." — "To what purpose was the book then published ?" cried I. — "Sir, the book was published in order to be sold ; and no book sold better, except the criticisms upon it, which came out soon after : of all kinds of writing, that goes off best at present ; and I generally fasten a criticism upon every selling book that is published.

"I once had an author who never left the least opening for the critics : close was the word, always very right and very dull, ever on the safe side of an argument ; yet, with all his qualifications, incapable of coming into favor. I soon perceived that his bent was for criticism ; and, as he was good for nothing else, supplied him with pens and paper, and planted him, at the beginning of every month, as a censor on the works of others. In short, I found him a treasure ; no merit could escape him : but what is most remarkable of all, he ever wrote best and bitterest when drunk." — "But are there not some works," interrupted I, "that, from the very manner of their com-

position, must be exempt from criticism ; particularly such as profess to disregard its laws?" — "There is no work whatsoever but he can criticise," replied the bookseller ; "even though you wrote in Chinese, he would have a pluck at you. Suppose you should take it into your head to publish a book, let it be a volume of Chinese letters, for instance ; write how you will, he shall show the world you could have written better. Should you, with the most local exactness, stick to the manners and customs of the country from whence you come ; should you confine yourself to the narrow limits of Eastern knowledge, and be perfectly simple and perfectly natural, he has then the strongest reason to exclaim. He may, with a sneer, send you back to China for readers. He may observe that, after the first or second letter, the iteration of the same simplicity is insupportably tedious ; but the worst of all is, the public, in such a case, will anticipate his censures, and leave you, with all your uninformative simplicity, to be mauled at discretion."

"Yes," cried I, "but in order to avoid his indignation, and, what I should fear more, that of the public, I would, in such a case, write with all the knowledge I was master of. As I am not possessed of much learning, at least I would not suppress what little I had ; nor would I appear more stupid than nature has made me." — "Here, then," cries the bookseller, "we should have you entirely in our power : unnatural, un-Eastern, quite out of character, erroneously sensible, would be the whole cry. Sir, we should then hunt

you down like a rat.” — “Head of my father !” said I, “sure there are but two ways ; the door must either be shut or it must be open. I must either be natural or unnatural.” — “Be what you will, we shall criticise you,” returned the bookseller, “and prove you a dunce in spite of your teeth. But, sir, it is time that I should come to business. I have just now in the press a history of China ; and if you will but put your name to it as the author, I shall repay the obligation with gratitude.” — “What, sir !” replied I, “put my name to a work which I have not written? Never ! while I retain a proper respect for the public and myself.” The bluntness of my reply quite abated the ardor of the bookseller’s conversation ; and, after about half an hour’s disagreeable reserve, he, with some ceremony, took his leave and withdrew.

THE LITTLE BEAU.

THOUGH naturally pensive, yet I am fond of gay company, and take every opportunity of thus dismissing the mind from duty. From this motive I am often found in the centre of a crowd ; and wherever pleasure is to be sold, am always a purchaser. In those places, without being remarked by any, I join in whatever goes forward ; work my passions into a similitude of frivolous earnestness, shout as they shout, and condemn as they happen to disapprove. A mind thus sunk for a while below its natural standard is qualified for stronger flights, as those first retire who would spring forward with greater vigor.

Attracted by the serenity of the evening, my friend and I lately went to gaze upon the company in one of the public walks near the city. Here we sauntered together for some time, either praising the beauty of such as were handsome, or the dresses of such as had nothing else to recommend them. We had gone thus deliberately forward for some time, when, stopping on a sudden, my friend caught me by the elbow, and led me out of the public walk. I could perceive by the quickness of his pace, and by his frequently looking

behind, that he was attempting to avoid somebody who followed : we now turned to the right, then to the left ; as we went forward, he still went faster ; but in vain : the person whom he attempted to escape hunted us through every doubling, and gained upon us each moment, so that at last we fairly stood still, resolving to face what we could not avoid.

Our pursuer soon came up, and joined us with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. "My dear Drybone," cries he, shaking my friend's hand, "where have you been hiding this half a century? Positively I had fancied you were gone to cultivate matrimony and your estate in the country." During the reply I had an opportunity of surveying the appearance of our new companion : his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness ; his looks were pale, thin, and sharp ; round his neck he wore a broad black ribbon, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass ; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist ; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt ; and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service. I was so much engaged with the peculiarity of his dress, that I attended only to the latter part of my friend's reply, in which he complimented Mr. Tibbs on the taste of his clothes, and the bloom in his countenance. "Pshaw, pshaw, Will," cried the figure, "no more of that, if you love me : you know I hate flattery, — on my soul I do ; and yet, to be sure, an intimacy with the great will improve one's appearance, and a course of venison will fatten ; and yet,

faith, I despise the great as much as you do ; but there are a great many damn'd honest fellows among them, and we must not quarrel with one half, because the other wants weeding. If they were all such as my Lord Mudler, one of the most good-natured creatures that ever squeezed a lemon, I should myself be among the number of their admirers. I was yesterday to dine at the Duchess of Piccadilly's. My lord was there. 'Ned,' says he to me, 'Ned,' says he, 'I'll hold gold to silver I can tell where you were poaching last night.' — 'Poaching, my lord?' says I : 'faith, you have missed already ; for I stayed at home, and let the girls poach for me. That's my way : I take a fine woman as some animals do their prey — stand still, and, swoop, they fall into my mouth.' "

"Ah, Tibbs, thou art a happy fellow," cried my companion, with looks of infinite pity ; "I hope your fortune is as much improved as your understanding in such company?" — "Improved !" replied the other : "you shall know, — but let it go no farther — a great secret — five hundred a year to begin with — my lord's word of honor for it. His lordship took me down in his own chariot yesterday, and we had a *tête-à-tête* dinner in the country, where we talked of nothing else." — "I fancy you forget, sir," cried I ; "you told us but this moment of your dining yesterday in town." — "Did I say so?" replied he coolly ; "to be sure, if I said so, it was so. Dined in town ! egad, now I do remember, I did dine in town ; but I dined in the country too ; for you must know, my boys, I eat two

dinners. By the by, I am grown as nice as the devil in my eating. I'll tell you a pleasant affair about that : we were a select party of us to dine at Lady Grogram's, — an affected piece, but let it go no farther — a secret. — Well, there happened to be no assafoetida in the sauce to a turkey, upon which, says I, I'll hold a thousand guineas, and say done first, that — But, dear Drybone, you are an honest creature ; lend me half-a-crown for a minute or two, or so, just till — ; but hearkee, ask me for it the next time we meet, or it may be twenty to one but I forget to pay you."

When he left us, our conversation naturally turned upon so extraordinary a character. "His very dress," cries my friend, "is not less extraordinary than his conduct. If you meet him this day, you find him in rags ; if the next, in embroidery. With those persons of distinction of whom he talks so familiarly he has scarcely a coffeehouse acquaintance. However, both for the interests of society, and perhaps for his own, Heaven has made him poor ; and while all the world perceives his wants, he fancies them concealed from every eye. An agreeable companion, because he understands flattery ; and all must be pleased with the first part of his conversation, though all are sure of its ending with a demand on their purse. While his youth countenances the levity of his conduct, he may thus earn a precarious subsistence ; but when age comes on, the gravity of which is incompatible with buffoonery, then will he find himself forsaken by all ; condemned in the decline of life to hang upon some rich

family whom he once despised, there to undergo all the ingenuity of studied contempt, to be employed only as a spy upon the servants, or a bugbear to fright the children into obedience."

THE ARTS OF A MERCER.

THE shops of London are as well furnished as those of Pekin. Those of London have a picture hung at their door, informing the passengers what they have to sell, as those at Pekin have a board to assure the buyer that they have no intent to cheat him.

I was this morning to buy silk for a nightcap. Immediately upon entering the mercer's shop, the master and his two men, with wigs plastered with powder, appeared to ask my commands. They were certainly the civillest people alive ; if I but looked, they flew to the place where I cast my eye ; every motion of mine sent them running round the whole shop for my satisfaction. I informed them that I wanted what was good, and they showed me not less than forty pieces, and each was better than the former, the prettiest pattern in nature, and the fittest in the world for night-caps. "My very good friend," said I to the mercer, "you must not pretend to instruct me in silks ; I know these in particular to be no better than your mere flimsy bungees." — "That may be," cried the mercer, who, I afterwards found, had never contradicted a man in his life : "I cannot pretend to say but they may ;

but I can assure you, my Lady Trail has had a sack from this piece this very morning." — "But, friend," said I, "though my lady has chosen a sack from it, I see no necessity that I should wear it for a nightcap." — "That may be," returned he again; "yet what becomes a pretty lady, will at any time look well on a handsome gentleman." This short compliment was thrown in so very seasonably upon my ugly face, that even though I disliked the silk, I desired him to cut me off the pattern of a nightcap.

While this business was consigned to his journeymen, the master himself took down some pieces of silk still finer than any I had yet seen, and spreading them before me, "There," cries he, "there's beauty; my Lord Snakeskin has bespoke the fellow to this for the birthnight this very morning; it would look charmingly in waistcoats." — "But I don't want a waistcoat," replied I. "Not want a waistcoat!" returned the mercer: "then I would advise you to buy one; when waistcoats are wanted, you may depend upon it they will come dear. Always buy before you want, and you are sure to be well used, as they say in Cheapside." There was so much justice in his advice, that I could not refuse taking it; besides, the silk, which was really a good one, increased the temptation; so I gave orders for that too.

As I was waiting to have my bargains measured and cut, which, I know not how, they executed but slowly, during the interval the mercer entertained me with the modern manner of some of the nobility receiving com-

pany in their morning gowns. "Perhaps, sir," adds he, "you have a mind to see what kind of silk is universally worn." Without waiting for my reply, he spreads a piece before me, which might be reckoned beautiful even in China. "If the nobility," continues he, "were to know I sold this to any under a Right Honorable, I should certainly lose their custom; you see, my lord, it is at once rich, tasty, and quite the thing."—"I am no lord," interrupted I.—"I beg pardon," cried he; "but be pleased to remember, when you intend buying a morning gown, that you had an offer from me of something worth money. Conscience, sir, conscience is my way of dealing; you may buy a morning gown now, or you may stay till they become dearer and less fashionable; but it is not my business to advise." In short, most reverend Fum, he persuaded me to buy a morning gown also, and would probably have persuaded me to have bought half the goods in his shop, if I had stayed long enough, or was furnished with sufficient money.

Upon returning home, I could not help reflecting, with some astonishment, how this very man, with such a confined education and capacity, was yet capable of turning me as he thought proper, and moulding me to his inclinations. I knew he was only answering his own purposes, even while he attempted to appear solicitous about mine: yet, by a voluntary infatuation, a sort of passion, compounded of vanity and good-nature, I walked into the snare with my eyes open, and put myself to future pain in order to give him

immediate pleasure. The wisdom of the ignorant somewhat resembles the instinct of animals ; it is diffused in but a very narrow sphere, but within that circle it acts with vigor, uniformity, and success.

THE MAN IN BLACK.

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.¹

I AM just returned from Westminster Abbey, the place of sepulture for the philosophers, heroes, and kings of England. What a gloom do monumental inscriptions and all the venerable remains of deceased merit inspire ! Imagine a temple marked with the hand of antiquity, solemn as religious awe, adorned with all the magnificence of barbarous profusion, dim windows, fretted pillars, long colonnades, and dark ceilings. Think, then, what were my sensations at being introduced to such a scene. I stood in the midst of the temple, and threw my eyes round on the walls, filled with the statues, the inscriptions, and the monuments of the dead.

Alas ! I said to myself, how does pride attend the puny child of dust even to the grave ! Even humble as I am, I possess more consequence in the present scene than the greatest hero of them all : they have

¹ These six essays, as indeed several others in this collection, are drawn from the "Citizen of the World," which is made up of letters from or to Lien Chi Altangi, a Chinese traveller, who was spending some little time in London. Many of the letters are merely essays upon any subject that occurred. These in this division have all a certain connection and personal interest.

toiled for an hour to gain a transient immortality, and are at length retired to the grave, where they have no attendant but the worm, none to flatter but the epitaph.

As I was indulging such reflections, a gentleman dressed in black, perceiving me to be a stranger, came up, entered into conversation, and politely offered to be my instructor and guide through the temple. "If any monument," said he, "should particularly excite your curiosity, I shall endeavor to satisfy your demands." I accepted, with thanks, the gentleman's offer, adding, that "I was come to observe the policy, the wisdom, and the justice of the English, in conferring rewards upon deceased merit. If adulation like this," continued I, "be properly conducted, as it can no ways injure those who are flattered, so it may be a glorious incentive to those who are now capable of enjoying it. It is the duty of every good government to turn this monumental pride to its own advantage; to become strong in the aggregate from the weakness of the individual. If none but the truly great have a place in this awful repository, a temple like this will give the finest lessons of morality, and be a strong incentive to true ambition. I am told, that none have a place here but characters of the most distinguished merit." The Man in Black seemed impatient at my observations, so I discontinued my remarks, and we walked on together to take a view of every particular monument in order as it lay.

As the eye is naturally caught by the finest objects,

I could not avoid being particularly curious about one monument, which appeared more beautiful than the rest. "That," said I to my guide, "I take to be the tomb of some very great man. By the peculiar excellence of the workmanship, and the magnificence of the design, this must be a trophy raised to the memory of some king who has saved his country from ruin, or lawgiver who has reduced his fellow-citizens from anarchy into just subjection." — "It is not requisite," replied my companion, smiling, "to have such qualifications in order to have a very fine monument here: more humble abilities will suffice." — "What! I suppose, then, the gaining two or three battles, or the taking half a score of towns, is thought a sufficient qualification?" — "Gaining battles, or taking towns," replied the Man in Black, "may be of service; but a gentleman may have a very fine monument here without ever seeing a battle or a siege." — "This, then, is the monument of some poet, I presume — of one whose wit has gained him immortality?" — "No, sir," replied my guide, "the gentleman who lies here never made verses; and as for wit, he despised it in others, because he had none himself." — "Pray tell me, then, in a word," said I, peevishly, "what is the great man who lies here particularly remarkable for?" — "Remarkable, sir!" said my companion; "why, sir, the gentleman that lies here is remarkable, very remarkable — for a tomb in Westminster Abbey." — "But, head of my ancestors! how has he got here? I fancy he could never bribe the guardians of the temple to

give him a place. Should he not be ashamed to be seen among company where even moderate merit would look like infamy?" — "I suppose," replied the Man in Black, "the gentleman was rich, and his friends, as is usual in such a case, told him he was great. He readily believed them; the guardians of the temple, as they got by the self-delusion, were ready to believe him too; so he paid his money for a fine monument; and the workman, as you see, has made him one of the most beautiful. Think not, however, that this gentleman is singular in his desire of being buried among the great; there are several others in the temple, who, hated and shunned by the great while alive, have come here fully resolved to keep them company now they are dead."

As we walked along to a particular part of the temple, "There," says the gentleman, pointing with his finger, "that is the Poet's Corner; there you see the monuments of Shakspeare, and Milton, and Prior, and Drayton." — "Drayton!" I replied; "I never heard of him before; but I have been told of one Pope — is he there?" — "It is time enough," replied my guide, "these hundred years; he is not long dead; people have not done hating him yet." — "Strange," cried I; "can any be found to hate a man whose life was wholly spent in entertaining and instructing his fellow-creatures?" — "Yes," says my guide, "they hate him for that very reason. There are a set of men called answerers of books, who take upon them to watch the republic of letters, and distribute reputation by the

sheet ; they somewhat resemble the eunuchs in a seraglio, who are incapable of giving pleasure themselves, and hinder those that would. These answerers have no other employment but to cry out Dunce and Scribbler ; to praise the dead and revile the living ; to grant a man of confessed abilities some small share of merit ; to applaud twenty blockheads in order to gain the reputation of candor ; and to revile the moral character of the man whose writings they cannot injure. Such wretches are kept in pay by some mercenary bookseller, or more frequently the bookseller himself takes this dirty work off their hands, as all that is required is to be very abusive and very dull. Every poet of any genius is sure to find such enemies ; he feels, though he seems to despise, their malice ; they make him miserable here, and in the pursuit of empty fame, at last he gains solid anxiety."

"Has this been the case with every poet I see here?" cried I. — "Yes, with every mother's son of them," replied he, "except he happened to be born a mandarine. If he has much money, he may buy reputation from your book-answerers, as well as a monument from the guardians of the temple."

"But are there not some men of distinguished taste, as in China, who are willing to patronize men of merit, and soften the rancor of malevolent dulness?"

"I own there are many," replied the Man in Black ; "but, alas ! sir, the book-answerers crowd about them, and call themselves the writers of books ; and the patron is too indolent to distinguish : thus poets are

kept at a distance, while their enemies eat up all their rewards at the mandarine's table."

Leaving this part of the temple, we made up to an iron gate, through which my companion told me we were to pass, in order to see the monuments of the kings. Accordingly, I marched up without further ceremony, and was going to enter, when a person who held the gate in his hand told me I must pay first. I was surprised at such a demand; and asked the man, whether the people of England kept a show?—whether the paltry sum he demanded was not a national reproach?—whether it was not more to the honor of the country to let their magnificence or their antiquities be openly seen, than thus meanly to tax a curiosity which tended to their own honor?—"As for your questions," replied the gate-keeper, "to be sure they may be very right, because I don't understand them; but, as for that there threepence, I farm it from one—who rents it from another—who hires it from a third—who leases it from the guardians of the temple: and we all must live." I expected, upon paying here, to see something extraordinary, since what I had seen for nothing filled me with so much surprise: but in this I was disappointed; there was little more within than black coffins, rusty armor, tattered standards, and some few slovenly figures in wax. I was sorry I had paid, but I comforted myself by considering it would be my last payment. A person attended us who without once blushing told an hundred lies: he talked of a lady who died by pricking her finger; of a king

with a golden head, and twenty such pieces of absurdity. "Look ye there, gentlemen," says he, pointing to an old oak chair, "there's a curiosity for ye ; in that chair the kings of England were crowned : you see also a stone underneath, and that stone is Jacob's pillow." I could see no curiosity either in the oak chair or the stone : could I, indeed, behold one of the old kings of England seated in this, or Jacob's head laid upon the other, there might be something curious in the sight ; but in the present case, there was no more reason for my surprise, than if I should pick a stone from their streets, and call it a curiosity, merely because one of the kings happened to tread upon it as he passed in a procession.

From hence our conductor led us through several dark walks and winding ways, uttering lies, talking to himself, and flourishing a wand which he held in his hand. He reminded me of the black magicians of Kobi. After we had been almost fatigued with a variety of objects, he at last desired me to consider attentively a certain suit of armor, which seemed to show nothing remarkable. "This armor," said he, "belonged to General Monk." — "Very surprising that a general should wear armor !" — "And pray," added he, "observe this cap ; this is General Monk's cap." — "Very strange indeed, very strange, that a general should have a cap also ! Pray, friend, what might this cap have cost originally ?" — "That, sir," says he, "I don't know ; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble." — "A very small recompense,

truly," said I. — "Not so very small," replied he, "for every gentleman puts some money into it, and I spend the money." — "What, more money! still more money!" — "Every gentleman gives something, sir." — "I'll give thee nothing," returned I; "the guardians of the temple should pay you your wages, friend, and not permit you to squeeze thus from every spectator. When we pay our money at the door to see a show, we never give more as we are going out. Sure, the guardians of the temple can never think they get enough. Show me the gate; if I stay longer, I may probably meet with more of those ecclesiastical beggars."

Thus leaving the temple precipitately, I returned to my lodgings, in order to ruminate over what was great, and to despise what was mean, in the occurrences of the day.

VIEWS OF PHILANTHROPY.

THOUGH fond of many acquaintances, I desire an intimacy only with a few. The Man in Black, whom I have often mentioned, is one whose friendship I could wish to acquire, because he possesses my esteem. His manners, it is true, are tinctured with some strange inconsistencies ; and he may be justly termed a humorist in a nation of humorists. Though he is generous even to profusion, he affects to be thought a prodigy of parsimony and prudence ; though his conversation be replete with the most sordid and selfish maxims, his heart is dilated with the most unbounded love. I have known him profess himself a man-hater, while his cheek was glowing with compassion ; and, while his looks were softened into pity, I have heard him use the language of the most unbounded ill-nature. Some affect humanity and tenderness, others boast of having such dispositions from nature ; but he is the only man I ever knew who seemed ashamed of his natural benevolence. He takes as much pains to hide his feelings, as any hypocrite would to conceal his indifference ; but on every unguarded moment the mask

drops off, and reveals him to the most superficial observer.

In one of our late excursions into the country, happening to discourse upon the provision that was made for the poor in England, he seemed amazed how any of his countrymen could be so foolishly weak as to relieve occasional objects of charity, when the laws had made such ample provision for their support. "In every parish-house," says he, "the poor are supplied with food, clothes, fire, and a bed to lie on; they want no more, I desire no more myself; yet still they seem discontented. I am surprised at the inactivity of our magistrates, in not taking up such vagrants, who are only a weight upon the industrious; I am surprised that the people are found to relieve them, when they must be at the same time sensible that it in some measure encourages idleness, extravagance, and imposture. Were I to advise any man for whom I had the least regard, I would caution him by all means not to be imposed upon by their false pretences: let me assure you, sir, they are impostors, every one of them, and rather merit a prison than relief."

He was proceeding in this strain, earnestly to dissuade me from an imprudence of which I am seldom guilty, when an old man, who still had about him the remnants of tattered finery, implored our compassion. He assured us that he was no common beggar, but forced into the shameful profession to support a dying wife and five hungry children. Being prepossessed against such falsehoods, his story had not the least in-

fluence upon me ; but it was quite otherwise with the Man in Black : I could see it visibly operate upon his countenance, and effectually interrupt his harangue. I could easily perceive, that his heart burned to relieve the five starving children, but he seemed ashamed to discover his weakness to me. While he thus hesitated between compassion and pride, I pretended to look another way, and he seized this opportunity of giving the poor petitioner a piece of silver, bidding him at the same time, in order that I should hear, go work for his bread, and not tease passengers with such impertinent falsehoods for the future.

As he had fancied himself quite unperceived, he continued, as we proceeded, to rail against beggars with as much animosity as before : he threw in some episodes on his own amazing prudence and economy, with his profound skill in discovering impostors ; he explained the manner in which he would deal with beggars were he a magistrate, hinted at enlarging some of the prisons for their reception, and told two stories of ladies that were robbed by beggar-men. He was beginning a third to the same purpose, when a sailor with a wooden leg once more crossed our walks, desiring our pity, and blessing our limbs. I was for going on without taking any notice, but my friend, looking wistfully upon the poor petitioner, bid me stop, and he would show me with how much ease he could at any time detect an impostor.

He now, therefore, assumed a look of importance, and in an angry tone began to examine the sailor, de-

manding in what engagement he was thus disabled and rendered unfit for service. The sailor replied, in a tone as angrily as he, that he had been an officer on board a private ship of war, and that he had lost his leg aboard, in defence of those who did nothing at home. At this reply, all my friend's importance vanished in a moment; he had not a single question more to ask; he now only studied what method he should take to relieve him unobserved. He had, however no easy part to act, as he was obliged to preserve the appearance of ill-nature before me, and yet relieve himself by relieving the sailor. Casting, therefore, a furious look upon some bundles of chips which the fellow carried in a string at his back, my friend demanded how he sold his matches; but, not waiting for a reply, desired, in a surly tone, to have a shilling's worth. The sailor seemed at first surprised at his demand, but soon recollecting himself, and presenting his whole bundle, "Here, master," says he, "take all my cargo, and a blessing into the bargain."

It is impossible to describe with what an air of triumph my friend marched off with his new purchase: he assured me, that he was firmly of opinion that those fellows must have stolen their goods, who could thus afford to sell them for half value. He informed me of several different uses to which those chips might be applied; he expatiated largely upon the savings that would result from lighting candles with a match, instead of thrusting them into the fire. He averred, that he would as soon have parted with a tooth as his

money to those vagabonds, unless for some valuable consideration. I cannot tell how long this panegyric upon frugality and matches might have continued, had not his attention been called off by another object more distressful than either of the former. A woman in rags, with one child in her arms, and another on her back, was attempting to sing ballads, but with such a mournful voice, that it was difficult to determine whether she was singing or crying. A wretch, who in the deepest distress still aimed at good-humor, was an object my friend was by no means capable of withstanding : his vivacity and his discourse were instantly interrupted ; upon this occasion, his very dissimulation had forsaken him. Even in my presence, he immediately applied his hands to his pockets, in order to relieve her ; but guess his confusion when he found he had already given away all the money he carried about him to former objects. The misery painted in the woman's visage was not half so strongly expressed as the agony in his. He continued to search for some time, but to no purpose, till, at length recollecting himself, with a face of ineffable good-nature, as he had no money, he put into her hands his shilling's worth of matches.

THE SAME, CONTINUED.

As there appeared something reluctantly good in the character of my companion, I must own it surprised me what could be his motives for thus concealing virtues which others take such pains to display. I was unable to repress my desire of knowing the history of a man who thus seemed to act under continual restraint, and whose benevolence was rather the effect of appetite than reason.

It was not, however, till after repeated solicitations he thought proper to gratify my curiosity. "If you are fond," says he, "of hearing hairbreadth 'scapes, my history must certainly please ; for I have been for twenty years upon the very verge of starving, without ever being starved.

"My father, the younger son of a good family, was possessed of a small living in the church. His education was above his fortune, and his generosity greater than his education. Poor as he was, he had his flatterers, still poorer than himself ; for every dinner he gave them they returned an equivalent in praise, and this was all he wanted. The same ambition that actu-

ates a monarch at the head of an army influenced my father at the head of his table : he told the story of the ivy-tree, and that was laughed at ; he repeated the jest of the two scholars and one pair of breeches, and the company laughed at that ; but the story of Taffy in the sedan-chair was sure to set the table in a roar : thus his pleasure increased in proportion to the pleasure he gave ; he loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him.

“As his fortune was but small, he lived up to the very extent of it ; he had no intentions of leaving his children money, for that was dross ; he was resolved they should have learning ; for learning, he used to observe, was better than silver or gold. For this purpose, he undertook to instruct us himself ; and took as much pains to form our morals as to improve our understanding. We were told, that universal benevolence was what first cemented society : we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own ; to regard the human face divine with affection and esteem ; he wound us up to be mere machines of pity, and rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made either by real or fictitious distress : in a word, we were perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands, before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing.

“I cannot avoid imagining, that thus refined by his lessons out of all my suspicion, and divested of even all the little cunning which nature had given me, I resembled, upon my first entrance into the busy and in-

sidious world, one of those gladiators who were exposed without armor in the amphitheatre at Rome. My father, however, who had only seen the world on one side, seemed to triumph in my superior discernment ; though my whole stock of wisdom consisted in being able to talk like himself upon subjects that once were useful, because they were then topics of the busy world, but that now were utterly useless, because connected with the busy world no longer.

“ The first opportunity he had of finding his expectations disappointed was in the very middling figure I made in the university ; he had flattered himself that he should soon see me rising into the foremost rank in literary reputation, but was mortified to find me utterly unnoticed and unknown. His disappointment might have been partly ascribed to his having overrated my talents, and partly to my dislike of mathematical reasonings, at a time when my imagination and memory, yet unsatisfied, were more eager after new objects than desirous of reasoning upon those I knew. This did not, however, please my tutor, who observed, indeed, that I was a little dull ; but at the same time allowed, that I seemed to be very good-natured, and had no harm in me.

“ After I had resided at college seven years, my father died, and left me — his blessing. Thus shoved from shore without ill-nature to protect, or cunning to guide, or proper stores to subsist me in so dangerous a voyage, I was obliged to embark in the wide world at twenty-two. But, in order to settle in life, my friends advised

(for they always advise when they begin to despise us), they advised me, I say, to go into orders.

“To be obliged to wear a long wig, when I liked a short one, or a black coat, when I generally dressed in brown, I thought was such a restraint upon my liberty, that I absolutely rejected the proposal. A priest in England is not the same mortified creature with a bonze in China : with us, not he that fasts best, but eats best, is reckoned the best liver ; yet I rejected a life of luxury, indolence, and ease, from no other consideration but that boyish one of dress. So that my friends were now perfectly satisfied I was undone ; and yet they thought it a pity for one who had not the least harm in him and was so very good-natured.

“Poverty naturally begets dependence, and I was admitted as flatterer to a great man. At first, I was surprised that the situation of a flatterer at a great man’s table could be thought disagreeable : there was no great trouble in listening attentively when his lordship spoke, and laughing when he looked round for applause. This even good manners might have obliged me to perform. I found, however, too soon, that his lordship was a greater dunce than myself ; and from that very moment my power of flattery was at an end. I now rather aimed at setting him right, than at receiving his absurdities with submission : to flatter those we do not know is an easy task ; but to flatter our intimate acquaintances, all whose foibles are strongly in our eye, is drudgery insupportable. Every time I now opened my lips in praise, my falsehood went to my

conscience ; his lordship soon perceived me to be unfit for service ; I was therefore discharged ; my patron at the same time being graciously pleased to observe, that he believed I was tolerably good-natured, and had not the least harm in me.

“Disappointed in ambition, I had recourse to love. A young lady, who lived with her aunt, and was possessed of a pretty fortune in her own disposal, had given me, as I fancied, some reason to expect success. The symptoms by which I was guided were striking. She had always laughed with me at her awkward acquaintance, and at her aunt among the number ; she always observed, that a man of sense would make a better husband than a fool, and I as constantly applied the observation in my own favor. She continually talked, in my company, of friendship and the beauties of the mind, and spoke of Mr. Shrimp my rival’s high-heeled shoes with detestation. These were circumstances which I thought strongly in my favor ; so, after resolving and resolving, I had courage enough to tell her my mind. Miss heard my proposal with serenity, seeming at the same time to study the figures of her fan. Out at last it came. There was but one small objection to complete our happiness, which was no more than—that she was married three months before to Mr. Shrimp, with high-heeled shoes ! By way of consolation, however, she observed, that, though I was disappointed in her, my addresses to her aunt would probably kindle her into sensibility ; as the old lady always allowed me to be very good-natured, and not to have the least share of harm in me.

“Yet still I had friends, numerous friends, and to them I was resolved to apply. O friendship! thou fond soother of the human breast, to thee we fly in every calamity; to thee the wretched seek for succor; on thee the care-tired son of misery fondly relies: from thy kind assistance the unfortunate always hopes relief, and may be ever sure of — disappointment. My first application was to a city scrivener, who had frequently offered to lend me money, when he knew I did not want it. I informed him, that now was the time to put his friendship to the test; that I wanted to borrow a couple of hundred for a certain occasion, and was resolved to take it up from him. ‘And pray, sir,’ cried my friend, ‘do you want all this money?’ — ‘Indeed, I never wanted it more,’ returned I. — ‘I am sorry for that,’ cries the scrivener, ‘with all my heart; for they who want money when they come to borrow, will always want money when they should come to pay.’

“From him I flew, with indignation, to one of the best friends I had in the world, and made the same request. ‘Indeed, Mr. Drybone,’ cries my friend, ‘I always thought it would come to this. You know, sir, I would not advise you but for your own good; but your conduct has hitherto been ridiculous in the highest degree, and some of your acquaintance always thought you a very silly fellow. Let me see — you want two hundred pounds. Do you only want two hundred, sir, exactly?’ — ‘To confess a truth,’ returned I, ‘I shall want three hundred; but then, I

have another friend, from whom I can borrow the rest.' — 'Why, then,' replied my friend, 'if you would take my advice, (and you know I should not presume to advise you but for your own good,) I would recommend it to you to borrow the whole sum from that other friend ; and then one note will serve for all, you know.'

"Poverty now began to come fast upon me ; yet instead of growing more provident or cautious as I grew poor, I became every day more indolent and simple. A friend was arrested for fifty pounds ; I was unable to extricate him, except by becoming his bail. When at liberty, he fled from his creditors, and left me to take his place. In prison I expected greater satisfactions than I enjoyed at large. I hoped to converse with men in this new world, simple and believing like myself ; but I found them as cunning and as cautious as those in the world I had left behind. They spunged up my money while it lasted, borrowed my coals and never paid for them, and cheated me when I played at cribbage. All this was done because they believed me to be very good-natured, and knew that I had no harm in me.

"Upon my first entrance into this mansion, which is to some the abode of despair, I felt no sensations different from those I experienced abroad. I was now on one side the door, and those who were unconfined were on the other : this was all the difference between us. At first, indeed, I felt some uneasiness, in considering how I should be able to provide this

week for the wants of the week ensuing ; but after some time, if I found myself sure of eating one day, I never troubled my head how I was to be supplied another. I seized every precarious meal with the utmost good-humor ; indulged no rants of spleen at my situation ; never called down Heaven and all the stars to behold me dining upon a halfpenny-worth of radishes ; my very companions were taught to believe that I liked salad better than mutton. I contented myself with thinking, that all my life I should either eat white bread or brown ; considered that all that happened was best ; laughed when I was not in pain, took the world as it went, and read Tacitus often for want of more books and company.

“How long I might have continued in this torpid state of simplicity I cannot tell, had I not been roused by seeing an old acquaintance, whom I knew to be a prudent blockhead, preferred to a place in the government. I now found that I had pursued a wrong track, and that the true way of being able to relieve others was first to aim at independence myself : my immediate care, therefore, was to leave my present habitation and make an entire reformation in my conduct and behavior. For a free, open, undesigning deportment, I put on that of closeness, prudence, and economy. One of the most heroic actions I ever performed, and for which I shall praise myself as long as I live, was the refusing half-a-crown to an old acquaintance, at the time when he wanted it, and I had it to spare : for this alone I deserve to be decreed an ovation.

“I now therefore pursued a course of uninterrupted frugality, seldom wanted a dinner, and was consequently invited to twenty. I soon began to get the character of a saving hunk that had money, and insensibly grew into esteem. Neighbors have asked my advice in the disposal of their daughters; and I have always taken care not to give any. I have contracted a friendship with an alderman, only by observing, that if we take a farthing from a thousand pounds, it will be a thousand pounds no longer. I have been invited to a pawnbroker’s table, by pretending to hate gravy; and am now actually upon treaty of marriage with a rich widow, for only having observed that the bread was rising. If ever I am asked a question, whether I know it or not, instead of answering, I only smile and lookwise. If a charity is proposed, I go about with the hat, but put nothing in myself. If a wretch solicits my pity, I observe that the world is filled with impostors, and take a certain method of not being deceived by never relieving. In short, I now find the truest way of finding esteem, even from the indigent, is to give away nothing, and thus have much in our power to give.”

IN THE MATTER OF OLD MAIDS AND BACHELORS.

LATELY, in company with my friend in black, whose conversation is now both my amusement and instruction, I could not avoid observing the great numbers of old bachelors and maiden ladies with which the city seems to be overrun. "Sure, marriage," said I, "is not sufficiently encouraged, or we should never behold such crowds of battered beaux and decayed coquettes, still attempting to drive a trade they have been so long unfit for, and swarming upon the gayety of the age. I behold an old bachelor in the most contemptible light, as an animal that lives upon the common stock without contributing his share: he is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many stratagems, and as much force, to drive the reluctant savage into the toils, as the Indians when they hunt the hyæna or the rhinoceros. The mob should be permitted after him, boys might play tricks on him with impunity, every well-bred company should laugh at him; and if, when turned of sixty, he offered to make love, his mistress might spit in his face, or, what

would be perhaps a greater punishment, should fairly grant the favor.

“As for old maids,” continued I, “they should not be treated with so much severity, because I suppose none would be so if they could. No lady, in her senses would choose to make a subordinate figure at christenings or lyings-in, when she might be the principal herself; nor curry favor with a sister-in-law, when she might command a husband; nor toil in preparing custards, when she might lie a-bed, and give directions how they ought to be made; nor stifle all her sensations in demure formality, when she might, with matrimonial freedom, shake her acquaintance by the hand, and wink at a *double entendre*. No lady could be so very silly as to live single, if she could help it. I consider an unmarried lady, declining into the vale of years, as one of those charming countries bordering on China, that lies waste for want of proper inhabitants. We are not to accuse the country, but the ignorance of its neighbors, who are insensible of its beauties, though at liberty to enter and cultivate the soil.”

“Indeed, sir,” replied my companion, “you are very little acquainted with the English ladies, to think they are old maids against their will. I dare venture to affirm, that you can hardly select one of them all, but has had frequent offers of marriage, which either pride or avarice has not made her reject. Instead of thinking it a disgrace, they take every occasion to boast of their former cruelty: a soldier does not exult

more when he counts over the wounds he has received, than a female veteran when she relates the wounds she has formerly given : exhaustless when she begins a narrative of the former death-dealing power of her eyes. She tells of the knight in gold lace, who died with a single frown, and never rose again till — he was married to his maid ; of the squire who, being cruelly denied, in a rage flew to the window, and lifting up the sash, threw himself, in an agony — into his arm-chair ; of the parson, who, crossed in love, resolutely swallowed opium, which banished the stings of despised love by — making him sleep. In short, she talks over her former losses with pleasure, and, like some tradesmen, finds consolation in the many bankruptcies she has suffered.

“ For this reason, whenever I see a superannuated beauty still unmarried, I tacitly accuse her either of pride, avarice, coquetry, or affectation. There’s Miss Jenny Tinderbox, I once remember her to have had some beauty and a moderate fortune. Her elder sister happened to marry a man of quality, and this seemed as a statute of virginity against poor Jane. Because there was one lucky hit in the family, she was resolved not to disgrace it by introducing a tradesman. By thus rejecting her equals, and neglected or despised by her superiors, she now acts in the capacity of tutor-ess to her sister’s children, and undergoes the drudgery of three servants, without receiving the wages of one.

“ Miss Squeeze was a pawnbroker’s daughter ; her

father had early taught her that money was a very good thing, and left her a moderate fortune at his death. She was so perfectly sensible of the value of what she had got, that she was resolved never to part with a farthing without an equality on the part of her suitor: she thus refused several offers made her by people who wanted to better themselves, as the saying is, and grew old and ill-natured, without ever considering that she should have made an abatement in her pretensions, from her face being pale, and marked with the small-pox.

“Lady Betty Tempest, on the contrary, had beauty, with fortune and family. But, fond of conquest, she passed from triumph to triumph: she had read plays and romances, and there had learned, that a plain man of common sense was no better than a fool; such she refused, and sighed only for the gay, giddy, inconstant, and thoughtless. After she had thus rejected hundreds who liked her, and sighed for hundreds who despised her, she found herself insensibly deserted: at present she is company only for her aunts and cousins, and sometimes makes one in a country-dance, with only one of the chairs for a partner, casts off round a joint-stool, and sets to a corner cupboard. In a word, she is treated with civil contempt from every quarter, and placed, like a piece of old-fashioned lumber, merely to fill up a corner.

“But Sophronia, the sagacious Sophronia, how shall I mention her? She was taught to love Greek and hate the men from her very infancy; she has rejected

fine gentlemen because they were not pedants, and pedants because they were not fine gentlemen; her exquisite sensibility has taught her to discover every fault in every lover, and her inflexible justice has prevented her pardoning them: thus she rejected several offers, till the wrinkles of age had overtaken her; and now, without one good feature in her face, she talks incessantly of the beauties of the mind."

A CASE AT WESTMINSTER HALL.

I HAD some intentions lately of going to visit Bedlam, the place where those who go mad are confined. I went to wait upon the Man in Black to be my conductor, but I found him preparing to go to Westminster Hall, where the English hold their courts of justice. It gave me some surprise to find my friend engaged in a lawsuit, but more so when he informed me that it had been pending for several years. "How is it possible," cried I, "for a man who knows the world to go to law? I am well acquainted with the courts of justice in China: they resemble rat-traps every one of them; nothing more easy than to get in, but to get out again is attended with some difficulty, and more cunning than rats are generally found to possess!"

"Faith," replied my friend, "I should not have gone to law but that I was assured of success before I began; things were presented to me in so alluring a light, that I thought by barely declaring myself a candidate for the prize, I had nothing more to do but to enjoy the fruits of the victory. Thus have I been upon the eve of an imaginary triumph every term

these ten years ; have travelled forward with victory ever in my view, but ever out of reach ; however, at present I fancy we have hampered our antagonist in such a manner, that, without some unforeseen demur, we shall this very day lay him fairly on his back."

"If things be so situated," said I, "I don't care if I attend you to the courts, and partake in the pleasure of your success. But prithee," continued I, as we set forward, "what reasons have you to think an affair at last concluded, which has given you so many former disappointments?" — "My lawyer tells me," returned he, "that I have Salkeld and Ventris strong in my favor, and that there are no less than fifteen cases in point." — "I understand," said I ; "those are two of your judges who have already declared their opinions." — "Pardon me," replied my friend, "Salkeld and Ventris are lawyers who some hundred years ago gave their opinions on cases similar to mine : these opinions which make for me, my lawyer is to cite ; and those opinions which look another way are cited by the lawyer employed by my antagonist : as I observed, I have Salkeld and Ventris for me ; he has Coke and Hale for him ; and he that has most opinions is most likely to carry his cause." — "But where is the necessity," cried I, "of prolonging a suit by citing the opinions and reports of others, since the same good sense which determined lawyers in former ages, may serve to guide your judges at this day? They at that time gave their opinions only from the light of reason ; your judges have the same light at

present to direct them ; let me even add, a greater, as in former ages there were many prejudices from which the present is happily free. If arguing from authorities be exploded from every other branch of learning, why should it be particularly adhered to in this? I plainly foresee how such a method of investigation must embarrass every suit, and even perplex the student ; ceremonies will be multiplied, formalities must increase, and more time will thus be spent in learning the arts of litigation, than in the discovery of right."

"I see," cries my friend, "that you are for a speedy administration of justice ; but all the world will grant, that the more time that is taken up in considering any subject, the better it will be understood. Besides, it is the boast of an Englishman, that his property is secure, and all the world will grant, that a deliberate administration of justice is the best way to secure his property. Why have we so many lawyers, but to secure our property? Why so many formalities, but to secure our property? Not less than one hundred thousand families live in opulence, elegance, and ease, merely by securing our property."

"To embarrass justice," returned I, "by a multiplicity of laws, or to hazard it by a confidence in our judges, are, I grant, the opposite rocks on which legislative wisdom has ever split. In one case, the client resembles that emperor who is said to have been suffocated with the bed-clothes which were only designed to keep him warm ; in the other, to that town which let the enemy take possession of its walls, in order to

show the world how little they depended upon aught but courage for safety. But, bless me ! what numbers do I see here — all in black ! — how is it possible that half this multitude can find employment ? ” — “ Nothing so easily conceived,” returned my companion ; “ they live by watching each other. For instance, the catchpole watches the man in debt, the attorney watches the catchpole, the counsellor watches the attorney, the solicitor the counsellor, and all find sufficient employment.” — “ I conceive you,” interrupted I ; “ they watch each other, but it is the client that pays them all for watching : it puts me in mind of a Chinese fable, which is entitled, ‘ Five Animals at a Meal.’ ”

“ A grasshopper, filled with dew, was merrily singing under a shade ; a whangam, that eats grasshoppers, had marked it for its prey, and was just stretching forth to devour it ; a serpent, that had for a long time fed only on whangams, was coiled up to fasten on the whangam ; a yellow bird was just upon the wing to dart upon the serpent ; a hawk had just stooped from above to seize the yellow bird ; all were intent on their prey, and unmindful of their danger : so the whangam ate the grasshopper, the serpent ate the whangam, the yellow bird the serpent, and the hawk the yellow bird ; when, sousing from on high, a vulture gobbled up the hawk, grasshopper, whangam, and all in a moment.”

I had scarcely finished my fable, when the lawyer came to inform my friend, that his cause was put off till another term, that money was wanting to retain,

and that all the world was of opinion, that the very next hearing would bring him off victorious. "If so, then," cries my friend, "I believe it will be my wisest way to continue the cause for another term; and, in the meantime, my friend here and I will go and see Bedlam."

A CONCLUSION.

AFTER a variety of disappointments, my wishes are at length fully satisfied. My son, so long expected, is arrived ; at once, by his presence, banishing my anxiety, and opening a new scene of unexpected pleasure. His improvements in mind and person have far surpassed even the sanguine expectations of a father. I left him a boy, but he is returned a man ; pleasing in his person, hardened by travel, and polished by adversity. His disappointment in love, however, had infused an air of melancholy into his conversation, which seemed at intervals to interrupt our mutual satisfaction. I expected that this could find a cure only from time ; but fortune, as if willing to load us with her favors, has, in a moment, repaid every uneasiness with rapture.

Two days after his arrival the Man in Black, with his beautiful niece, came to congratulate us upon this pleasing occasion ; but guess our surprise, when my friend's lovely kinswoman was found to be the very captive my son had rescued from Persia, and who had been wrecked on the Wolga, and was carried by the Russian peasants to the port of Archangel. Were I

to hold the pen of a novelist, I might be prolix in describing their feelings at so unexpected an interview ; but you may conceive their joy without my assistance : words were unable to express their transports ; then how can words describe it ?

When two young persons are sincerely enamoured of each other, nothing can give me such pleasure as seeing them married : whether I know the parties or not, I am happy at thus binding one link more in the universal chain. Nature has, in some measure, formed me for a match-maker, and given me a soul to sympathize with every mode of human felicity. I instantly, therefore, consulted the Man in Black, whether we might not crown their mutual wishes by marriage : his soul seems formed of similar materials with mine ; he instantly gave his consent, and the next day was appointed for the solemnization of their nuptials.

All the acquaintances which I had made since my arrival were present at this gay solemnity. The little Beau was constituted master of the ceremonies, and his wife, Mrs. Tibbs, conducted the entertainment with proper decorum. The Man in Black and the pawnbroker's widow were very sprightly and tender upon this occasion. The widow was dressed up under the direction of Mrs. Tibbs ; and as for her lover, his face was set off by the assistance of a pig-tail wig, which was lent by the little Beau, to fit him for making love with proper formality. The whole company easily perceived that it would be a double wedding before all was over, and, indeed, my friend and the widow seemed

to make no secret of their passion ; he even called me aside, in order to know my candid opinion, whether I did not think him a little too old to be married. "As for my own part," continued he, "I know I am going to play the fool ; but all my friends will praise my wisdom, and produce me as the very pattern of discretion to others."

At dinner everything seemed to run on with good humor, harmony, and satisfaction. Every creature in company thought themselves pretty, and every jest was laughed at. The Man in Black sat next his mistress, helped her plate, chimed her glass, and jogging her knees and her elbow, he whispered something arch in her ear, on which she patted his cheek : never was antiquated passion so playful, so harmless, and amusing, as between this reverend couple.

The second course was now called for, and, among a variety of other dishes, a fine turkey was placed before the widow. The Europeans, you know, carve as they eat ; my friend, therefore, begged his mistress to help him to a part of the turkey. The widow, pleased with an opportunity of showing her skill in carving, (an art upon which it seems she piqued herself,) began to cut it up by first taking off the leg. "Madam," cries my friend, "if I might be permitted to advise, I would begin by cutting off the wing, and then the leg will come off more easily." — "Sir," replies the widow, "give me leave to understand cutting up a fowl : I always begin with the leg." — "Yes, madam," replies the lover ; "but if the wing be the

most convenient manner, I would begin with the wing." — "Sir," interrupts the lady, "when you have fowls of your own, begin with the wing if you please, but give me leave to take off the leg; I hope I am not to be taught at this time of day." — "Madam," interrupts he, "we are never too old to be instructed." — "Old, sir!" interrupts the other; "who is old, sir? when I die of age, I know of some that will quake for fear. If the leg does not come off, take the turkey to yourself." — "Madam," replied the Man in Black, "I don't care a farthing whether the leg or the wing comes off; if you are for the leg first, why, you shall have the argument, even though it be as I say." — "As for the matter of that," cries the widow, "I don't care a fig whether you are for the leg off or on: and, friend, for the future keep your distance." — "Oh," replied the other, "that is easily done; it is only removing to the other end of the table; and so, madam, your most obedient humble servant."

Thus was this courtship of an age destroyed in one moment; for this dialogue effectually broke off the match between this respectable couple, that had been but just concluded. The smallest accidents disappoint the most important treaties. However, though it in some measure interrupted the general satisfaction, it no ways lessened the happiness of the youthful couple; and, by the young lady's looks, I could perceive she was not entirely displeased with this interruption.

In a few hours the whole transaction seemed entirely forgotten, and we have all since enjoyed those

satisfactions which result from a consciousness of making each other happy. My son and his fair partner are fixed here for life : the Man in Black has given them up a small estate in the country, which, added to what I was able to bestow, will be capable of supplying all the real, but not the fictitious, demands of happiness. As for myself, the world being but one city to me, I do not much care in which of the streets I happen to reside : I shall, therefore, spend the remainder of my days in examining the manners of different countries, and have prevailed upon the Man in Black to be my companion. "They must often change," says Confucius, "who would be constant in happiness or wisdom."



BOOKS AND AUTHORS.



THE BOOK-TAUGHT PHILOSOPHER.

BOOKS, my son, while they teach us to respect the interests of others, often make us unmindful of our own ; while they instruct the youthful reader to grasp at social happiness, he grows miserable in detail, and, attentive to universal harmony, often forgets that he himself has a part to sustain in the concert. I dislike, therefore, the philosopher who describes the inconveniences of life in such pleasing colors that the pupil grows enamoured of distress, longs to try the charms of poverty, meets it without dread, nor fears its inconveniences till he severely feels them.

A youth who has thus spent his life among books, new to the world, and unacquainted with man but by philosophic information, may be considered as a being whose mind is filled with the vulgar errors of the wise ; utterly unqualified for a journey through life, yet confident of his own skill in the direction, he sets out with confidence, blunders on with vanity, and finds himself at last undone.

He first has learned from books, and then lays it down as a maxim, that all mankind are virtuous or vicious in excess ; and he has been long taught to

detest vice, and love virtue. Warm, therefore, in attachments, and steadfast in enmity, he treats every creature as a friend or foe ; expects from those he loves unerring integrity, and consigns his enemies to the reproach of wanting every virtue. On this principle he proceeds ; and here begin his disappointments. Upon a closer inspection of human nature he perceives that he should have moderated his friendship, and softened his severity ; for he often finds the excellences of one part of mankind clouded with vice, and the faults of the other brightened with virtue ; he finds no character so sanctified that has not its failings, none so infamous but has somewhat to attract our esteem ; he beholds impiety in lawn, and fidelity in fetters.

He now, therefore, but too late, perceives that his regards should have been more cool, and his hatred less violent ; that the truly wise seldom court romantic friendships with the good, and avoid, if possible, the resentment even of the wicked : every moment gives him fresh instances that the bonds of friendship are broken, if drawn too closely, and that those whom he has treated with disrespect more than retaliate the injury ; at length, therefore, he is obliged to confess, that he has declared war upon the vicious half of mankind, without being able to form an alliance among the virtuous to espouse his quarrel.

Our book-taught philosopher, however, is now too far advanced to recede ; and though poverty be the just consequence of the many enemies his conduct

has created, yet he is resolved to meet it without shrinking. Philosophers have described poverty in most charming colors, and even his vanity is touched in thinking that he shall show the world, in himself, one more example of patience, fortitude, and resignation. "Come, then, O Poverty ! for what is there in thee dreadful to the WISE? Temperance, Health, and Frugality walk in thy train ; Cheerfulness and Liberty are ever thy companions. Shall any be ashamed of thee, of whom Cincinnatus was not ashamed? The running brook, the herbs of the field, can amply satisfy nature ; man wants but little, nor that little long. Come, then, O Poverty, while kings stand by and gaze with admiration at the true philosopher's resignation."

The goddess appears ; for Poverty ever comes at the call : but, alas ! he finds her by no means the charming figure books and his warm imagination had painted. As when an Eastern bride, whom her friends and relations had long described as a model of perfection, pays her first visit, the longing bridegroom lifts the veil to see a face he had never seen before ; but instead of a countenance blazing with beauty like the sun, he beholds deformity shooting icicles to his heart : such appears Poverty to her new entertainer ; all the fabric of enthusiasm is at once demolished, and a thousand miseries rise up on its ruins, while Contempt, with pointing finger, is foremost in the hideous procession.

The poor man now finds that he can get no kings to look at him while he is eating ; he finds that, in

proportion as he grows poor, the world turns its back upon him, and gives him leave to act the philosopher in all the majesty of solitude. It might be agreeable enough to play the philosopher while we are conscious that mankind are spectators ; but what signifies wearing the mask of sturdy contentment, and mounting the stage of restraint, when not one creature will assist at the exhibition? Thus is he forsaken of men, while his fortitude wants the satisfaction even of self-applause : for either he does not feel his present calamities, and that is natural insensibility ; or he disguises his feelings, and that is dissimulation.

Spleen now begins to take up the man : not distinguishing in his resentments, he regards all mankind with detestation, and commencing man-hater, seeks solitude to be at liberty to rail.

It has been said, that he who retires to solitude is either a beast or an angel. The censure is too severe, and the praise unmerited ; the discontented being who retires from society is generally some good-natured man, who has begun life without experience, and knew not how to gain it in his intercourse with mankind.

THE PROFITS OF POETRY.

I FANCY the character of a poet is in every country the same : fond of enjoying the present, careless of the future ; his conversation that of a man of sense, his actions those of a fool ; of fortitude able to stand unmoved at the bursting of an earthquake, yet of sensibility to be affected by the breaking of a teacup. Such is his character, which, considered in every light, is the very opposite of that which leads to riches.

The poets of the West are as remarkable for their indigence as their genius, and yet, among the numerous hospitals designed to relieve the poor, I have heard of but one erected for the benefit of decayed authors. This was founded by Pope Urban VIII., and called THE RETREAT OF THE INCURABLES ; intimating, that it was equally impossible to reclaim the patients who sued for reception from poverty or from poetry. To be sincere, were I to send you an account of the lives of the Western poets, either ancient or modern, I fancy you would think me employed in collecting materials for a history of human wretchedness.

Homer is the first poet and beggar of note among the ancients : he was blind, and sung his ballads about

the streets ; but it is observed, that his mouth was more frequently filled with verses than with bread. Plautus, the comic poet, was better off, — he had two trades ; he was a poet for his diversion, and helped to turn a mill in order to gain a livelihood. Terence was a slave ; and Boethius died in a gaol.

Among the Italians, Paulo Borghese, almost as good a poet as Tasso, knew fourteen different trades, and yet died because he could get employment in none. Tasso himself, who had the most amiable character of all poets, has often been obliged to borrow a crown from some friend, in order to pay for a month's subsistence : he has left us a pretty sonnet, addressed to his cat, in which he begs the light of her eyes to write by, being too poor to afford himself a candle. But Bentivoglio, poor Bentivoglio ! chiefly demands our pity. His comedies will last with the Italian language : he dissipated a noble fortune in acts of charity and benevolence ; but, falling into misery in his old age, was refused to be admitted into an hospital which he himself had erected.

In Spain, it is said, the great Cervantes died of hunger ; and it is certain that the famous Camoens ended his days in an hospital.

If we turn to France, we shall there find even stronger instances of the ingratitude of the public. Vaugelas, one of the politest writers and one of the honestest men of his time, was surnamed the Owl, from his being obliged to keep within all day, and venture out only by night, through fear of his credit-

ors. His last will is very remarkable. After having bequeathed all his worldly substance to the discharging his debts, he goes on thus: "But, as there still may remain some creditors unpaid, even after all that I have shall be disposed of, in such a case it is my last will, that my body should be sold to the surgeons to the best advantage, and that the purchase should go to the discharging those debts which I owe to society; so that if I could not, while living, at least when dead I may be useful."

Cassandre was one of the greatest geniuses of his time, yet all his merit could not procure him a bare subsistence. Being by degrees driven into an hatred of all mankind, from the little pity he found amongst them, he even ventured at last ungratefully to impute his calamities to Providence. In his last agonies, when the priest entreated him to rely on the justice of Heaven, and ask mercy from him that made him, — "If God," replies he, "has shown me no justice here, what reason have I to expect any from him hereafter?" But being answered, that a suspension of justice was no argument that should induce us to doubt of its reality, — "Let me entreat you," continued his confessor, "by all that is dear, to be reconciled to God, your father, your maker, and friend." — "No," replied the exasperated wretch, "you know the manner in which he left me to live; and," pointing to the straw on which he was stretched, "you see the manner in which he leaves me to die!"

But the sufferings of the poet in other countries is

nothing when compared to his distresses here ; the names of Spenser and Otway, Butler and Dryden, are every day mentioned as a national reproach : some of them lived in a state of precarious indigence, and others literally died of hunger.

At present the few poets of England no longer depend on the great for subsistence ; they have now no other patrons but the public, and the public, collectively considered, is a good and a generous master. It is, indeed, too frequently mistaken as to the merits of every candidate for favor ; but to make amends, it is never mistaken long. A performance, indeed, may be forced for a time into reputation, but, destitute of real merit, it soon sinks ; time, the touchstone of what is truly valuable, will soon discover the fraud, and an author should never arrogate to himself any share of success, till his works have been read at least ten years with satisfaction.

A man of letters at present, whose works are valuable, is perfectly sensible of their value. Every polite member of the community, by buying what he writes, contributes to reward him. The ridicule, therefore, of living in a garret might have been wit in the last age, but continues such no longer, because no longer true. A writer of real merit now may easily be rich, if his heart be set only on fortune ; and for those who have no merit, it is but fit that such should remain in merited obscurity. He may now refuse an invitation to dinner, without fearing to incur his patron's displeasure, or to starve by remaining at home. He may

now venture to appear in company with just such clothes as other men generally wear, and talk even to princes with all the conscious superiority of wisdom. Though he cannot boast of fortune here, yet he can bravely assert the dignity of independence.

THE LABORS OF THE LEARNED.

I AM amused, my dear Fum, with the labors of some of the learned here. One shall write you a whole folio on the dissection of a caterpillar ; another shall swell his works with a description of the plumage on the wing of a butterfly ; a third shall see a little world on a peach leaf, and publish a book to describe what his readers might see more clearly in two minutes, only by being furnished with eyes and a microscope.

I have frequently compared the understandings of such men to their own glasses. Their field of vision is too contracted to take in the whole of any but minute objects ; they view all nature bit by bit ; now the proboscis, now the antennæ, now the pinnæ of—a flea. Now the polypus comes to breakfast upon a worm ; now it is kept up, to see how long it will live without eating ; now it is turned inside outward, and now it sickens and dies. Thus they proceed, laborious in trifles, constant in experiment, without one single abstraction, by which alone knowledge may be properly said to increase ; till at last their ideas, ever employed upon minute things, contract to the size of the dimin-

utive object, and a single mite shall fill the whole mind's capacity.

Yet believe me, my friend, ridiculous as these men are to the world, they are set up as objects of esteem for each other. They have particular places appointed for their meetings: in which one shows his cockle-shell, and is praised by all the society; another produces his powder, makes some experiments that result in nothing, and comes off with admiration and applause; a third comes out with the important discovery of some new process in the skeleton of a mole, and is set down as the accurate and sensible; while one, still more fortunate than the rest, by pickling, potting, and preserving monsters, rises into unbounded reputation.

The labors of such men, instead of being calculated to amuse the public, are laid out only in diverting each other. The world becomes very little the better, or the wiser, for knowing what is the peculiar food of an insect, that is itself the food of another, which in its turn is eaten by a third; but there are men who have studied themselves into a habit of investigating and admiring such minutiae. To these such subjects are pleasing, as there are some who contentedly spend whole days in endeavoring to solve enigmas, or disentangle the puzzling sticks of children.

But of all the learned, those who pretend to investigate remote antiquity have least to plead in their own defence, when they carry this passion to a faulty excess. They are generally found to supply by conjecture the want of record, and then by perseverance are

wrought up into a confidence of the truth of opinions which, even to themselves, at first appeared founded only in imagination.

The Europeans have heard much of the kingdom of China: its politeness, arts, commerce, laws, and morals are, however, but very imperfectly known among them. They have even now in their Indian warehouses numberless utensils, plants, minerals, and machines, of the use of which they are entirely ignorant; nor can any among them even make a probable guess for what they might have been designed. Yet, though this people be so ignorant of the present real state of China, the philosophers I am describing have entered into long, learned, laborious disputes about what China was two thousand years ago. China and European happiness are but little connected even at this day; but European happiness and China two thousand years ago have certainly no connection at all. However, the learned have written on, and pursued the subject through all the labyrinths of antiquity; though the early dews and the tainted gale be passed away, though no footsteps remain to direct the doubtful chase, yet still they run forward, open upon the uncertain scent, and though in fact they follow nothing, are earnest in the pursuit. In this chase, however, they all take different ways. One, for example, confidently assures us, that China was peopled by a colony from Egypt. Sesostris, he observes, led his army as far as the Ganges; therefore, if he went so far, he might still have gone as far as China, which is

but about a thousand miles from thence ; therefore he did go to China ; therefore China was not peopled before he went there ; therefore it was peopled by him. Besides, the Egyptians have pyramids ; the Chinese have, in like manner, their porcelain tower : the Egyptians used to light up candles upon every rejoicing ; the Chinese have lanterns upon the same occasion : the Egyptians had their great river ; so have the Chinese. But what serves to put the matter past a doubt is, that the ancient kings of China and those of Egypt were called by the same names. The Emperor Ki is certainly the same with King Atoes ; for, if we only change *K* into *A*, and *i* into *toes*, we shall have the name Atoes : and, with equal ease, Menes may be proved to be the same with the Emperor Yu ; therefore the Chinese are a colony from Egypt.

But another of the learned is entirely different from the last ; and he will have the Chinese to be a colony planted by Noah, just after the Deluge. First, from the vast similitude there is between the name of Fohi, the founder of the Chinese monarchy, and that of Noah, the preserver of the human race : Noah, Fohi, — very like each other truly ; they have each but four letters, and only two of the four happen to differ. But, to strengthen the argument, Fohi, as the Chinese chronicle asserts, had no father. Noah, it is true, had a father, as the European Bible tells us ; but then, as this father was probably drowned in the flood, it is just the same as if he had no father at all ; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same. Just after the flood the

earth was covered with mud ; if it was covered with mud, it must have been incrustated mud ; if it was incrustated, it was clothed with verdure : this was a fine unembarrassed road for Noah to fly from his wicked children ; he therefore did fly from them, and took a journey of two thousand miles for his own amusement ; therefore Noah and Fohi are the same.

Another sect of literati—for they all pass among the vulgar for very great scholars—assert, that the Chinese came neither from the colony of Sesostris, nor from Noah, but are descended from Magog, Meshec, and Tubal, and therefore neither Sesostris, nor Noah, nor Fohi, are the same.

It is thus, my friend, that indolence assumes the airs of wisdom, and while it tosses the cup and ball with infantine folly, desires the world to look on, and calls the stupid pastime philosophy and learning.

THE ADVANTAGES OF A STRONG TITLE-PAGE.

It is surprising what an influence titles shall have upon the mind, even though these titles be of our own making. Like children, we dress up the puppets in finery, and then stand in astonishment at the plastic wonder. I have been told of a rat-catcher here, who strolled for a long time about the villages near town, without finding any employment ; at last, however, he thought proper to take the title of his Majesty's Rat-catcher in ordinary, and thus succeeded beyond his expectations : when it was known that he caught rats at court, all were ready to give him countenance and employment.

But of all the people, they who make books seem most perfectly sensible of the advantages of titular dignity. All seem convinced, that a book written by vulgar hands can neither instruct nor improve ; none but kings, chams, and mandarins can write with any probability of success. If the titles inform me right, not only kings and courtiers, but emperors themselves, in this country, periodically supply the press.

A man here who should write, and honestly confess that he wrote, for bread, might as well send his manuscript to fire the baker's oven ; not one creature will read him : all must be court-bred poets, or pretend at least to be court-bred, who can expect to please. Should the caitiff fairly avow a design of emptying our pockets and filling his own, every reader would instantly forsake him : even those who write for bread themselves would combine to worry him, perfectly sensible that his attempts only served to take the bread out of their mouths.

And yet this silly prepossession the more amazes me, when I consider, that almost all the excellent productions in wit that have appeared here were purely the offspring of necessity ; their Drydens, Butlers, Otways, and Farquhars, were all writers for bread. Believe me, my friend, hunger has a most amazing faculty of sharpening the genius ; and he who, with a full belly, can think like a hero, after a course of fasting, shall rise to the sublimity of a demi-god.

But what will most amaze is, that this very set of men, who are now so much depreciated by fools, are, however, the very best writers they have among them at present. For my own part, were I to buy a hat, I would not have it from a stocking-maker, but a hatter ; were I to buy shoes, I should not go to the tailor's for that purpose. It is just so with regard to wit : did I, for my life, desire to be well served, I would apply only to those who made it their trade, and lived by it. You smile at the oddity of my opinion : but be assured,

my friend, that wit is in some measure mechanical; and that a man long habituated to catch at even its resemblance, will at last be happy enough to possess the substance. By a long habit of writing he acquires a justness of thinking, and a mastery of manner, which holiday writers, even with ten times his genius, may vainly attempt to equal.

How then are they deceived who expect from title, dignity, and exterior circumstance, an excellence, which is in some measure acquired by habit, and sharpened by necessity! You have seen, like me, many literary reputations, promoted by the influence of fashion, which have scarce survived the possessor; you have seen the poor hardly earn the little reputation they acquired, and their merit only acknowledged when they were incapable of enjoying the pleasures of popularity: such, however, is the reputation worth possessing; that which is hardly earned is hardly lost.

THE DISPUTES OF THE LEARNED.

THE disputes among the learned here are now carried on in a much more compendious manner than formerly. There was a time when folio was brought to oppose folio, and a champion was often listed for life under the banners of a single sorites. At present the controversy is decided in a summary way; an epigram or an acrostic finishes the debate, and the combatant, like the incursive Tartar, advances and retires with a single blow.

An important literary debate at present engrosses the attention of the town. It is carried on with sharpness, and a proper share of this epigrammatical fury. An author, it seems, has taken an aversion to the faces of several players, and has written verses to prove his dislike; the players fall upon the author, and assure the town he must be dull, and their faces must be good, because he wants a dinner: a critic comes to the poet's assistance, asserting that the verses were perfectly original, and so smart, that he could never have written them without the assistance of friends; the friends, upon this, arraign the critic, and plainly prove the verses to be all the author's own.

So at it they are, all four together by the ears ; the friends at the critic, the critic at the players, the players at the author, and the author at the players again. It is impossible to determine how this many-sided contest will end, or which party to adhere to. The town, without siding with any, views the combat in suspense, like the fabled hero of antiquity, who beheld the earth-born brothers give and receive mutual wounds, and fall by indiscriminate destruction.

This is, in some measure, the state of the present dispute ; but the combatants here differ in one respect from the champions of the fable. Every new wound only gives vigor for another blow ; though they appear to strike, they are in fact mutually swelling themselves into consideration, and thus advertising each other into fame. “To-day,” says one, “my name shall be in the Gazette, the next day my rival’s ; people will naturally inquire about us ; thus we shall at least make a noise in the streets, though we have got nothing to sell.” I have read of a dispute of a similar nature, which was managed here about twenty years ago. Hildebrand Jacob, as I think he was called, and Charles Johnson were poets, both at that time possessed of great reputation ; for Johnson had written eleven plays, acted with great success ; and Jacob, though he had written but five, had five times thanked the town for their unmerited applause. They soon became mutually enamoured of each other’s talents ; they wrote, they felt, they challenged the town for each other. Johnson assured the public, that no poet

alive had the easy simplicity of Jacob, and Jacob exhibited Johnson as a masterpiece in the pathetic. Their mutual praise was not without effect ; the town saw their plays, were in raptures, read, and, without censuring them, forgot them. So formidable an union, however, was soon opposed by Tibbald. Tibbald asserted that the tragedies of the one had faults, and the comedies of the other substituted wit for vivacity : the combined champions flew at him like tigers, arraigned the censor's judgment, and impeached his sincerity. It was a long time a dispute among the learned, which was in fact the greatest man, Jacob, Johnson, or Tibbald ; they had all written for the stage with great success, their names were seen in almost every paper, and their works in every coffee-house. However, in the hottest of the dispute, a fourth combatant made his appearance, and swept away the three combatants, tragedy, comedy, and all, into undistinguished ruin.

From this time they seemed consigned into the hands of criticism ; scarce a day passed in which they were not arraigned as detested writers. The critics, those enemies of Dryden and Pope, were their enemies. So Jacob and Johnson, instead of mending by criticism, called it envy ; and because Dryden and Pope were censured, they compared themselves to Dryden and Pope.

But to return. The weapon chiefly used in the present controversy is epigram ; and certainly never was a keener made use of. They have discovered

surprising sharpness on both sides. The first that came out upon this occasion was a new kind of composition in this way, and might more properly be called an epigrammatic thesis, than an epigram. It consists, first, of an argument in prose; next follows a motto from Roscommon; then comes the epigram; and, lastly, notes serving to explain the epigram. But you shall have it with all its decorations.

AN EPIGRAM,

ADDRESSED TO THE GENTLEMAN REFLECTED ON IN THE
ROSCIAD, A POEM, BY THE AUTHOR.

*Worried with debts, and past all hopes of bail,
His pen he prostitutes, t' avoid a jail.* — ROSCOMMON.

Let not the *hungry* Bavius' angry stroke
Awake resentment, or your rage provoke;
But pitying his distress, let virtue shine,
And giving each your bounty, *let him dine*;
For, thus retained, as learned counsel can,
Each case, however bad, he'll new japan,
And, by a quick transition, plainly show
'Twas no defect of yours, but *pocket low*,
That caused his *putrid kennel* to o'erflow.

The last lines are certainly executed in a very masterly manner. It is of that species of argumentation, called the perplexing. It effectually flings the antagonist into a mist; there is no answering it: the laugh is raised against him, while he is endeavoring to find out the jest. At once he shows, that the author has a kennel, and that his kennel is putrid, and that his putrid kennel overflows. But why does it overflow? It

overflows, because the author happens to have low pockets !

There was also another new attempt in this way ; a prosaic epigram which came out upon this occasion. This is so full of matter, that a critic might split it into fifteen epigrams, each properly fitted with its sting. You shall see it.

TO G. C. AND R. L.

'Twas you, or I, or he, or all together ;
'Twas one, both, three of them, they know not whether.
This I believe, between us great or small,
You, I, he, wrote it not — 'twas Churchill's all.

There, there's a perplex ! I could have wished, to make it quite perfect, the author, as in the case before, had added notes. Almost every word admits a scholium, and a long one too. I, YOU, HE ! Suppose a stranger should ask, "and who are you?" Here are three obscure persons spoken of, that may in a short time be utterly forgotten. Their names should have consequently been mentioned in notes at the bottom. But when the reader comes to the words *great* and *small*, the maze is inextricable. Here the stranger may dive for a mystery, without ever reaching the bottom. Let him know, then, that *small* is a word purely introduced to make good rhyme, and *great* was a very proper word to keep *small* company.

Yet, by being thus a spectator of others' dangers, I must own I begin to tremble in this literary contest for my own. I begin to fear that my challenge to Dr.

Rock was unadvised, and has procured me more antagonists than I had at first expected. I have received private letters from several of the literati here, that fill my soul with apprehension. I may safely aver, that I never gave any creature in this good city offence, except only my rival Dr. Rock ; yet by the letters I every day receive, and by some I have seen printed, I am arraigned at one time as being a dull fellow, at another as being pert ; I am here petulant, there I am heavy. By the head of my ancestors, they treat me with more inhumanity than a flying-fish. If I dive and run my nose to the bottom, there a devouring shark is ready to swallow me up ; if I skim the surface, a pack of dolphins are at my tail to snap me ; but when I take wing, and attempt to escape them by flight, I become a prey to every ravenous bird that winnows the bosom of the deep.



THE ECCENTRICITIES OF FASHION.

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A LADY OF DISTINCTION.

I WAS some days ago agreeably surprised by a message from a lady of distinction, who sent me word, that she most passionately desired the pleasure of my acquaintance, and with the utmost impatience expected an interview. I will not deny, my dear Fum Hoam, but that my vanity was raised at such an invitation : I flattered myself that she had seen me in some public place, and had conceived an affection for my person, which thus induced her to deviate from the usual decorums of her sex. My imagination painted her in all the bloom of youth and beauty. I fancied her attended by the Loves and Graces ; and I set out with the most pleasing expectations of seeing the conquest I had made.

When I was introduced into her apartment, my expectations were quickly at an end : I perceived a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a sofa, who nodded, by way of approbation, at my approach. This, as I was afterwards informed, was the lady herself, — a woman equally distinguished for rank, politeness, taste, and understanding. As I was dressed after the fashion of Europe, she had taken me for an Eng-

lishman, and consequently saluted me in her ordinary manner: but when the footman informed her grace that I was the gentleman from China, she instantly lifted herself from the couch, while her eyes sparkled with unusual vivacity. "Bless me! can this be the gentleman that was born so far from home? What an unusual share of *somethingness* in his whole appearance! Lord, how I am charmed with the outlandish cut of his face! how bewitching the exotic breadth of his forehead! I would give the world to see him in his own country dress. Pray, turn about, sir, and let me see you behind. There, there's a travelled air for you! You that attend there, bring up a plate of beef cut into small pieces; I have a violent passion to see him eat. Pray, sir, have you got your chopsticks about you? It will be so pretty to see the meat carried to the mouth with a jerk. Pray, speak a little Chinese: I have learned some of the language myself. Lord! have you nothing pretty from China about you; something that one does not know what to do with? I have got twenty things from China that are of no use in the world. Look at those jars; they are of the right pea-green: these are the furniture!" — "Dear madam," said I, "these, though they may appear fine in your eyes, are but paltry to a Chinese; but as they are useful utensils, it is proper they should have a place in every apartment." — "Useful, sir!" replied the lady; "sure you mistake; they are of no use in the world." — "What! are they not filled with an infusion of tea, as in China?" replied I. "Quite empty and

useless, upon my honor, sir." — "Then they are the most cumbrous and clumsy furniture in the world, as nothing is truly elegant but what unites use with beauty." — "I protest," says the lady, "I shall begin to suspect thee of being an actual barbarian. I suppose you hold my two beautiful pagods in contempt." — "What!" cried I, "has Fohi spread his gross superstitions here also! Pagods of all kinds are my aversion." — "A Chinese, a traveller, and want taste! It surprises me. Pray, sir, examine the beauties of that Chinese temple which you see at the end of the garden. Is there anything in China more beautiful?" — "Where I stand, I see nothing, madam, at the end of the garden, that may not as well be called an Egyptian pyramid as a Chinese temple; for that little building in view is as like the one as t'other." — "What, sir! is not that a Chinese temple? you must surely be mistaken. Mr. Freeze, who designed it, calls it one, and nobody disputes his pretensions to taste." I now found it vain to contradict the lady in anything she thought fit to advance; so was resolved rather to act the disciple than the instructor. She took me through several rooms, all furnished, as she told me, in the Chinese manner; sprawling dragons, squatting pagods, and clumsy mandarins were stuck upon every shelf: in turning round, one must have used caution not to demolish a part of the precarious furniture.

In a house like this, thought I, one must live continually upon the watch; the inhabitant must resemble a knight in an enchanted castle, who expects to meet

an adventure at every turning. "But, madam," said I, "do not accidents ever happen to all this finery?" — "Man, sir," replied the lady, "is born to misfortunes; and it is but fit I should have a share. Three weeks ago, a careless servant snapped off the head of a favorite mandarin: I had scarce done grieving for that, when a monkey broke a beautiful jar; this I took the more to heart, as the injury was done me by a friend! However, I survived the calamity; when yesterday crash went half a dozen dragons upon the marble hearthstone: and yet I live; I survive it all: you can't conceive what comfort I find under afflictions from philosophy. There is Seneca, and Bolingbroke, and some others, who guide me through life, and teach me to support its calamities." I could not but smile at a woman who makes her own misfortunes, and then deplores the miseries of her situation. Wherefore, tired of acting with dissimulation, and willing to indulge my meditations in solitude, I took leave just as the servant was bringing in a plate of beef, pursuant to the directions of his mistress.

THE DIFFERENCE OF CEREMONIES.

CEREMONIES are different in every country ; but true politeness is everywhere the same. Ceremonies, which take up so much of our attention, are only artificial helps which ignorance assumes in order to imitate politeness, which is the result of good sense and good nature. A person possessed of those qualities, though he had never seen a court, is truly agreeable ; and if without them, would continue a clown, though he had been all his life a gentleman usher.

How would a Chinese, bred up in the formalities of an Eastern court, be regarded should he carry all his good manners beyond the Great Wall? How would an Englishman, skilled in all the decorums of Western good breeding, appear at an Eastern entertainment? Would he not be reckoned more fantastically savage than even his unbred footman?

Ceremony resembles that base coin which circulates through a country by the royal mandate ; it serves every purpose of real money at home, but is entirely useless if carried abroad : a person who should attempt to circulate his native trash in another country would be thought either ridiculous or culpable. He is

truly well-bred, who knows when to value and when to despise those national peculiarities, which are regarded by some with so much observance ; a traveller of taste at once perceives that the wise are polite all the world over, but that fools are polite only at home.

I have now before me two very fashionable letters upon the same subject, both written by ladies of distinction ; one of whom leads the fashion in England, and the other sets the ceremonies of China : they are both regarded in their respective countries by all the *beau monde*, as standards of taste and models of true politeness, and both give us a true idea of what they imagine elegant in their admirers : which of them understands true politeness, or whether either, you shall be at liberty to determine. The English lady writes thus to her female confidant : —

“ As I live, my dear Charlotte, I believe the Colonel will carry it at last ; he is a most irresistible fellow, that is flat. So well dressed, so neat, so sprightly, and plays about one so agreeably, that I vow he has as much spirits as the Marquis of Monkeyman’s Italian greyhound. I first saw him at Ranelagh ; he shines there : he is nothing without Ranelagh, and Ranelagh nothing without him. The next day he sent a card and compliments, desiring to wait on mamma and me to the music subscription. He looked all the time with such irresistible impudence, that positively he had something in his face gave me as much pleasure as a pair-royal of naturals in my own hand. He waited on mamma and me the next morning to know how we got home : you must know the insidious devil makes love to us both. Rap went the footman at the door ; bounce went my heart : I thought he would have rattled the house down. Chariot drove up to the window, with his foot-

men in the prettiest liveries; he has infinite taste, that is flat. Mamma had spent all the morning at her head; but, for my part, I was in an undress to receive him; quite easy, mind that; no way disturbed at his approach: mamma pretended to be as *degagée* as I; and yet I saw her blush in spite of her. Positively he is a most killing devil! We did nothing but laugh all the time he staid with us; I never heard so many very good things before: at first he mistook mamma for my sister, at which she laughed; then he mistook my natural complexion for paint, at which I laughed; and then he showed us a picture in the lid of his snuff-box, at which we all laughed. He plays picquet so very ill, and is so very fond of cards, and loses with such a grace, that positively he has won me; I have got a cool hundred, but have lost my heart. I need not tell you that he is only a colonel of the train-bands. I am, dear Charlotte, yours forever,

“BELINDA.”

The Chinese lady addresses her confidant, a poor relation of the family, upon the same occasion; in which she seems to understand decorums even better than the Western beauty. You who have resided so long in China will readily acknowledge the picture to be taken from nature; and, by being acquainted with the Chinese customs, will better apprehend the lady's meaning.

FROM YAOUA TO YAYA.

“Papa insists upon one, two, three, four hundred taels from the colonel, my lover, before he parts with a lock of my hair. Oh how I wish the dear creature may be able to produce the money, and pay papa my fortune! The colonel is reckoned the politest man in all Shensi. The first visit he paid at our house — mercy, what stooping, and cringing, and stopping, and fidgiting, and going back, and creeping forward, there was be-

tween him and papa! one would have thought he had got the seventeen books of ceremonies all by heart. When he was come into the hall, he flourished his hands three times in a very graceful manner. Papa, who would not be outdone, flourished his four times; upon this the colonel began again, and both thus continued flourishing for some minutes in the politest manner imaginable. I was posted in the usual place behind the screen, where I saw the whole ceremony through a slit. Of this the colonel was sensible, for papa informed him. I would have given the world to have shown him my little shoes, but had no opportunity. It was the first time I had ever the happiness of seeing any man but papa, and I vow, my dear Yaya, I thought my three souls would actually have fled from my lips. Ho! but he looked most charmingly: he is reckoned the best shaped man in the whole province, for he is very fat and very short; but even those natural advantages are improved by his dress, which is fashionable past description. His head was close shaven, all but the crown, and the hair of that was braided into a most beautiful tail, that reached down to his heels, and was terminated by a bunch of yellow roses. Upon his first entering the room, I could easily perceive he had been highly perfumed with assafœtida. But then his looks—his looks, my dear Yaya, were irresistible. He kept his eyes steadfastly fixed on the wall during the whole ceremony, and I sincerely believe no accident could have discomposed his gravity, or drawn his eyes away. After a polite silence of two hours, he gallantly begged to have the singing women introduced, purely for my amusement. After one of them had for some time entertained us with her voice, the colonel and she retired for some minutes together. I thought they would never have come back: I must own he is a most agreeable creature. Upon his return they again renewed the concert, and he continued to gaze upon the wall as usual, when, in less than half an hour more, ho! but he retired out of the room with another. He is, indeed, a most agreeable creature.

“When he came to take his leave, the whole ceremony be-

gan afresh : papa would see him to the door ; but the colonel swore he would rather see the earth turned upside down than permit him to stir a single step, and papa was at last obliged to comply. As soon as he was got to the door, papa went out to see him on horseback : here they continued half an hour bowing and cringing, before one would mount or the other go in ; but the colonel was at last victorious. He had scarce gone an hundred paces from the house, when papa running out hallooed after him, ‘A good journey ;’ upon which the colonel returned, and would see papa into his house before ever he would depart. He was no sooner got home than he sent me a very fine present of duck eggs painted of twenty different colors. His generosity, I own, has won me. I have ever since been trying over the eight letters of good fortune, and have great hopes. All I have to apprehend is, that after he has married me, and that I am carried to his house close shut up in my chair, when he comes to have the first sight of my face, he may shut me up a second time, and send me back to papa. However, I shall appear as fine as possible : mamma and I have been to buy the clothes for my wedding. I am to have a new *foong hoang* in my hair, the beak of which will reach down to my nose ; the milliner from whom we bought that and our ribbons cheated us as if she had no conscience, and so, to quiet mine, I cheated her. All this is fair, you know. I remain, my dear Yaya, your ever faithful

“YAOUA.”



ON LITERATURE AND TASTE.

THE HISTORY OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK
FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT
TO THE PRESENT TIME
BY J. B. H. [illegible]
IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I.
NEW YORK: [illegible]
1845

SENTIMENTAL COMEDY.

THE theatre, like all other amusements, has its fashions and its prejudices ; and when satiated with its excellence, mankind begin to mistake change for improvement. For some years tragedy was the reigning entertainment ; but of late it has entirely given way to comedy, and our best efforts are now exerted in these lighter kinds of composition. The pompous train, the swelling phrase, and the unnatural rant are displaced for that natural portrait of human folly and frailty, of which all are judges, because all have sat for the picture.

But as in describing nature it is presented with a double face, either of mirth or sadness, our modern writers find themselves at a loss which chiefly to copy from ; and it is now debated, whether the exhibition of human distress is likely to afford the mind more entertainment than that of human absurdity ?

Comedy is defined by Aristotle to be a picture of the frailties of the lower part of mankind, to distinguish it from tragedy, which is an exhibition of the misfortunes of the great. When comedy, therefore, ascends to produce the characters of princes or gen-

erals upon the stage, it is out of its walk, since low life and middle life are entirely its object. The principal question therefore is, whether, in describing low or middle life, an exhibition of its follies be not preferable to a detail of its calamities? Or, in other words, which deserves the preference, — the weeping sentimental comedy so much in fashion at present, or the laughing and even low comedy which seems to have been last exhibited by Vanbrugh and Cibber?

If we apply to authorities, all the great masters in the dramatic art have but one opinion. Their rule is, that as tragedy displays the calamities of the great, so comedy should excite our laughter by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. Boileau, one of the best modern critics, asserts that comedy will not admit of tragic distress : —

Le comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs,
N'admet point dans ses vers de tragiques douleurs.

Nor is this rule without the strongest foundation in nature, as the distresses of the mean by no means affect us so strongly as the calamities of the great. When tragedy exhibits to us some great man fallen from his height, and struggling with want and adversity, we feel his situation in the same manner as we suppose he himself must feel, and our pity is increased in proportion to the height from which he fell. On the contrary, we do not so strongly sympathize with one born in humbler circumstances, and encountering

accidental distress ; so that while we melt for Belisarius, we scarce give halfpence to the beggar who accosts us in the street. The one has our pity ; the other our contempt. Distress, therefore, is the proper object of tragedy, since the great excite our pity by their fall ; but not equally so of comedy, since the actors employed in it are originally so mean, that they sink but little by their fall.

Since the first origin of the stage, tragedy and comedy have run in distinct channels, and never till of late encroached upon the provinces of each other. Terence, who seems to have made the nearest approaches, always judiciously stops short before he comes to the downright pathetic ; and yet he is even reproached by Cæsar for wanting the *vis comica*. All the other comic writers of antiquity aim only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous, but never exalt their characters into buskined pomp, or make what Voltaire humorously calls *a tradesman's tragedy*.

Yet notwithstanding this weight of authority, and the universal practice of former ages, a new species of dramatic composition has been introduced, under the name of sentimental comedy, in which the virtues of private life are exhibited, rather than the vices exposed ; and the distresses rather than the faults of mankind make our interest in the piece. These comedies have had of late great success, perhaps from their novelty, and also from their flattering every man in his favorite foible. In these plays almost all the characters are good, and exceedingly generous ; they are lavish

enough of their tin money on the stage ; and though they want humor, have abundance of sentiment and feeling. If they happen to have faults or foibles, the spectator is taught, not only to pardon, but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts ; so that folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended, and the comedy aims at touching our passions without the power of being truly pathetic. In this manner we are likely to lose one great source of entertainment on the stage ; for while the comic poet is invading the province of the tragic muse, he leaves her lovely sister quite neglected. Of this, however, he is no way solicitous, as he measures his fame by his profits.

But it will be said that the theatre is formed to amuse mankind, and that it matters little, if this end be answered, by what means it is obtained. If mankind find delight in weeping at comedy, it would be cruel to abridge them in that or any other innocent pleasure. If those pieces are denied the name of comedies, yet call them by any other name, and if they are delightful, they are good. Their success, it will be said, is a mark of their merit, and it is only abridging our happiness to deny us an inlet to amusement.

These objections, however, are rather specious than solid. It is true that amusement is a great object of the theatre, and it will be allowed that these sentimental pieces do often amuse us ; but the question is, whether the true comedy would not amuse us more ? The question is, whether a character supported through-

out a piece with its ridicule still attending, would not give us more delight than this species of bastard tragedy, which only is applauded because it is new?

A friend of mine, who was sitting unmoved at one of these sentimental pieces, was asked how he could be so indifferent? "Why, truly," says he, "as the hero is but a tradesman, it is indifferent to me whether he be turned out of his counting-house on Fish-street Hill, since he will still have enough left to open shop in St. Giles's."

The other objection is as ill-grounded ; for though we should give these pieces another name, it will not mend their efficacy. It will continue a kind of mulish production, with all the defects of its opposite parents, and marked with sterility. If we are permitted to make comedy weep, we have an equal right to make tragedy laugh, and to set down in blank verse the jests and repartees of all the attendants in a funeral procession.

But there is one argument in favor of sentimental comedy, which will keep it on the stage, in spite of all that can be said against it. It is, of all others, the most easily written. Those abilities that can hammer out a novel are fully sufficient for the production of a sentimental comedy. It is only sufficient to raise the characters a little ; to deck out the hero with a ribbon, or give the heroine a title ; then to put an insipid dialogue, without character or humor, into their mouths, give them mighty good hearts, very fine clothes, furnish a new set of scenes, make a pathetic scene or two,

with a sprinkling of tender melancholy conversation through the whole, and there is no doubt but all the ladies will cry, and all the gentlemen applaud.

Humor at present seems to be departing from the stage, and it will soon happen that our comic players will have nothing left for it but a fine coat and a song. It depends upon the audience whether they will actually drive those poor merry creatures from the stage, or sit at a play as gloomy as at the tabernacle. It is not easy to recover an art when once lost ; and it will be but a just punishment, that when, by our being too fastidious, we have banished humor from the stage, we should ourselves be deprived of the art of laughing.

TASTE.

AMIDST the frivolous pursuits and pernicious dissipations of the present age a respect for the qualities of the understanding still prevails to such a degree, that almost every individual pretends to have a taste for the Belles Lettres. The spruce apprentice sets up for a critic, and the puny beau piques himself upon being a connoisseur. Without assigning causes for this universal presumption, we shall proceed to observe, that if it was attended with no other inconvenience than that of exposing the pretender to the ridicule of those few who can sift his pretensions, it might be unnecessary to undeceive the public, or to endeavor at the reformation of innocent folly, productive of no evil to the commonwealth. But in reality this folly is productive of manifold evils to the community. If the reputation of taste can be acquired, without the least assistance of literature, by reading modern poems and seeing modern plays, what person will deny himself the pleasure of such an easy qualification? Hence the youth of both sexes are debauched to diversion, and seduced from much more profitable occupations into idle endeavors after literary fame ; and a super-

ficial, false taste, founded on ignorance and conceit, takes possession of the public. The acquisition of learning, the study of nature, is neglected as superfluous labor ; and the best faculties of the mind remain unexercised, and indeed unopened, by the power of thought and reflection. False taste will not only diffuse itself through all our amusements, but even influence our moral and political conduct ; for what is false taste but want of perception to discern propriety and distinguish beauty ?

It has often been alleged, that taste is a natural talent, as independent of art as strong eyes or a delicate sense of smelling ; and, without all doubt, the principal ingredient in the composition of taste is a natural sensibility, without which it cannot exist : but it differs from the senses in this particular, that they are finished by nature, whereas taste cannot be brought to perfection without proper cultivation ; for taste pretends to judge, not only of nature, but also of art ; and that judgment is founded upon observation and comparison.

What Horace has said of genius is still more applicable to taste : —

Naturâ fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quæsitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium : alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicè.

HOR. *Art. Poet.*

'Tis long disputed, whether poets claim
From *art* or *nature* their best right to fame.

But *art*, if not enriched by nature's vein,
And a rude *genius* of uncultured strain,
Are useless both, but when in friendship joined,
A mutual succor in each other find.

FRANCIS.

We have seen *genius* shine without the help of *art*, but *taste* must be cultivated by art before it will produce agreeable fruit. This, however, we must still inculcate with Quintilian, that study, precept, and observation, will nought avail, without the assistance of nature : —

Illud tamen imprimis testandum est, nihil præcepta atque artes valere, nisi adjuvante naturâ.

Yet even though nature has done her part, by implanting the seeds of taste, great pains must be taken, and great skill exerted, in raising them to a proper pitch of vegetation. The judicious tutor must gradually and tenderly unfold the mental faculties of the youth committed to his charge. He must cherish his delicate perception ; store his mind with proper ideas ; point out the different channels of observation ; teach him to compare objects ; to establish the limits of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood ; to distinguish beauty from tinsel, and grace from affectation : in a word, to strengthen and improve by culture, experience, and instruction those natural powers of feeling and sagacity which constitute the faculty called taste, and enable the professor to enjoy the delights of the Belles Lettres.

We cannot agree in opinion with those who imagine, that nature has been equally favorable to all men, in conferring upon them a fundamental capacity, which may be improved to all the refinement of taste and criticism. Every day's experience convinces us of the contrary. Of two youths educated under the same preceptor, instructed with the same care, and cultivated with the same assiduity, one shall not only comprehend, but even anticipate, the lessons of his master, by dint of natural discernment, while the other toils in vain to imbibe the least tincture of instruction. Such, indeed, is the distinction between genius and stupidity, which every man has an opportunity of seeing among his friends and acquaintance. Not that we ought too hastily to decide upon the natural capacities of children, before we have maturely considered the peculiarity of disposition, and the bias by which genius may be strangely warped from the common path of education. A youth incapable of retaining one rule of grammar, or of acquiring the least knowledge of the classics, may nevertheless make great progress in mathematics — nay, he may have a strong genius for the mathematics, without being able to comprehend a demonstration of Euclid; because his mind conceives in a peculiar manner, and is so intent upon contemplating the object in one particular point of view, that it cannot perceive it in any other. We have known an instance of a boy, who, while his master complained that he had not capacity to comprehend the properties of a right-angled triangle, had

actually, in private, by the power of his genius, formed a mathematical system of his own, discovered a series of curious theorems, and even applied his deductions to practical machines of surprising construction. Besides, in the education of youth we ought to remember, that some capacities are like the *pyra præcokia*, — they soon blow, and soon attain to all the degree of maturity which they are capable of acquiring ; while, on the other hand, there are geniuses of slow growth, that are late in bursting the bud, and long in ripening. Yet the first shall yield a faint blossom and insipid fruit ; whereas the produce of the other shall be distinguished and admired for its well concocted juice and exquisite flavor. We have known a boy of five years of age surprise everybody by playing on the violin in such a manner as seemed to promise a prodigy in music. He had all the assistance that art could afford ; by the age of ten his genius was at the ἀκμή ; yet after that period, notwithstanding the most intense application, he never gave the least signs of improvement. At six he was admired as a miracle of music ; at six-and-twenty he was neglected as an ordinary fiddler. The celebrated Dean Swift was a remarkable instance in the other extreme. He was long considered as an incorrigible dunce, and did not obtain his degree at the University but *ex speciali gratia* ; yet when his powers began to unfold, he signalized himself by a very remarkable superiority of genius. When a youth therefore appears dull of apprehension, and seems to derive no advantage from study and instruction, the

tutor must exercise his sagacity in discovering whether the soil be absolutely barren, or sown with seed repugnant to its nature, or of such a quality as requires repeated culture and length of time to set its juices in fermentation. These observations, however, relate to capacity in general, which we ought carefully to distinguish from taste. Capacity implies the power of retaining what is received ; taste is the power of relishing or rejecting whatever is offered for the entertainment of the imagination. A man may have capacity to acquire what is called learning and philosophy ; but he must have also sensibility before he feels those emotions with which taste receives the impressions of beauty.

Natural taste is apt to be seduced and debauched by vicious precept and bad example. There is a dangerous tinsel in false taste, by which the unwary mind and young imagination are often fascinated. Nothing has been so often explained, and yet so little understood, as simplicity in writing. Simplicity, in this acceptation, has a larger signification than either the *ἀπλόον* of the Greeks or the *simplex* of the Latins ; for it implies beauty. It is the *ἀπλόον καὶ ἡδύν* of Demetrius Phalereus, the *simplex munditiis* of Horace, and expressed by one word, *naïveté*, in the French language. It is, in fact, no other than beautiful nature, without affectation or extraneous ornament. In statuary it is the Venus of Medicis ; in architecture the Pantheon. It would be an endless task to enumerate all the instances of this natural simplicity that occur

in poetry and painting, among the ancients and moderns. We shall only mention two examples of it, the beauty of which consists in the pathetic.

Anaxagoras the philosopher, and preceptor of Pericles, being told that both his sons were dead, laid his hand upon his heart, and, after a short pause, consoled himself with a reflection couched in three words, ἦδ' εἰν θνητοὺς γεγεννηκώς, "I knew they were mortal." The other instance we select from the tragedy of Macbeth. The gallant Macduff, being informed that his wife and children were murdered by order of the tyrant, pulls his hat over his eyes, and his internal agony bursts out into an exclamation of four words, the most expressive perhaps that ever were uttered: "He has no children." This is the energetic language of simple nature, which is now grown into disrepute. By the present mode of education we are forcibly warped from the bias of nature, and all simplicity in manners is rejected. We are taught to disguise and distort our sentiments, until the faculty of thinking is diverted into an unnatural channel; and we not only relinquish and forget, but also become incapable of, our original dispositions. We are totally changed into creatures of art and affectation. Our perception is abused, and even our senses are perverted. Our minds lose their native force and flavor. The imagination, sweated by artificial fire, produces nought but vapid bloom. The genius, instead of growing like a vigorous tree, extending its branches on every side, and bearing delicious fruit, resembles a stunted yew, tortured into

some wretched form, projecting no shade, displaying no flower, diffusing no fragrance, yielding no fruit, and affording nothing but a barren conceit for the amusement of the idle spectator.

Thus debauched from nature, how can we relish her genuine productions? As well might a man distinguish objects through a prism, that presents nothing but a variety of colors to the eye ; or a maid pining in the green sickness prefer a biscuit to a cinder. It has been often alleged, that the passions can never be wholly deposited, and that by appealing to these a good writer will always be able to force himself into the hearts of his readers : but even the strongest passions are weakened — nay, sometimes totally extinguished — by mutual opposition, dissipation, and acquired insensibility. How often at the theatre is the tear of sympathy and the burst of laughter repressed by a ridiculous species of pride, refusing approbation to the author and actor, and renouncing society with the audience ! This seeming insensibility is not owing to any original defect. Nature has stretched the string, though it has long ceased to vibrate. It may have been displaced and distracted by the violence of pride ; it may have lost its tone through long disuse, or be so twisted or overstrained as to produce the most jarring discords.

If so little regard is paid to nature when she knocks so powerfully at the breast, she must be altogether neglected and despised in her calmer mood of serene tranquillity, when nothing appears to recommend her

but simplicity, propriety, and innocence. A person must have delicate feelings that can taste the celebrated repartee in Terence : " Homo sum ; nihil humani a me alienum puto," — " I am a man ; therefore think I have an interest in everything that concerns humanity." A clear blue sky, spangled with stars, will prove an insipid object to eyes accustomed to the glare of torches and tapers, gilding and glitter ; eyes that will turn with disgust from the green mantle of the spring, so gorgeously adorned with buds and foliage, flowers and blossoms, to contemplate a gaudy silken robe, striped and intersected with unfriendly tints, that fritter the masses of light, and distract the vision, pinked into the most fantastic forms, flounced, and furbelowed, and fringed with all the littleness of art unknown to elegance.

Those ears that are offended by the notes of the thrush, the blackbird, and the nightingale will be regaled and ravished by the squeaking fiddle, touched by a musician who has no other genius than that which lies in his fingers : they will even be entertained with the rattling of coaches, and the alarming knock by which the doors of fashionable people are so loudly distinguished. The sense of smelling that delights in the scent of excrementitious animal juices, such as musk, civet, and urinous salts, will loathe the fragrance of new mown hay, the sweetbriar, the honeysuckle, and the rose. The organs that are gratified with the taste of sickly veal bled into a palsy, crammed fowls, and dropsical brawn, peas without substance, peaches

without taste, and pine-apples without flavor, will certainly nauseate the native, genuine, and salutary taste of Welch beef, Banstead mutton, and barn-door fowls, whose juices are concocted by a natural digestion, and whose flesh is consolidated by free air and exercise. In such a total perversion of the senses the ideas must be misrepresented, the powers of the imagination disordered, and the judgment, of consequence, unsound. The disease is attended with a false appetite, which the natural food of the mind will not satisfy. It will prefer Ovid to Tibullus, and the rant of Lee to the tenderness of Otway. The soul sinks into a kind of sleepy idiotism, and is diverted by toys and baubles, which can only be pleasing to the most superficial curiosity. It is enlivened by a quick succession of trivial objects, that glisten and dance before the eye, and, like an infant, is kept awake and inspirited by the sound of a rattle. It must not only be dazzled and aroused, but also cheated, hurried, and perplexed, by the artifice of deception, business, intricacy, and intrigue, — a kind of low juggle, which may be termed the legerdemain of genius.

In this state of depravity the mind cannot enjoy, nor indeed distinguish, the charms of natural and moral beauty and decorum. The ingenious blush of native innocence, the plain language of ancient faith and sincerity, the cheerful resignation to the will of Heaven, the mutual affection of the charities, the voluntary respect paid to superior dignity or station, the virtue of beneficence, extended even to the brute creation —

nay, the very crimson glow of health, and swelling lines of beauty, are despised, detested, scorned, and ridiculed, as ignorance, rudeness, rusticity, and superstition. Thus we see how moral and natural beauty are connected, and of what importance it is, even to the formation of taste, that the manners should be severely superintended. This is a task which ought to take the lead of science : for we will venture to say, that virtue is the foundation of taste ; or rather, that virtue and taste are built upon the same foundation of sensibility, and cannot be disjoined without offering violence to both. But virtue must be informed, and taste instructed ; otherwise they will both remain imperfect and ineffectual : —

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis ;
 Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes ;
 Quod sit conscripti, quod judicis officium quæ
 Partes in bellum missi ducis ; ille profecto
 Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

HOR.

The critic who with nice discernment knows
 What to his country and his friends he owes ;
 How various nature warms the human breast,
 To love the parent, brother, friend, or guest ;
 What the great functions of our judges are,
 Of senators, and generals sent to war ;
 He can distinguish, with unerring art,
 The strokes peculiar to each different part.

FRANCIS.

Thus we see taste is composed of nature improved by art, of feeling tutored by instruction.

CULTIVATION OF TASTE.

HAVING explained what we conceive to be true taste, and in some measure accounted for the prevalence of vitiated taste, we should proceed to point out the most effectual manner in which a natural capacity may be improved into a delicacy of judgment, and an intimate acquaintance with the Belles Lettres. We shall take it for granted that proper means have been used to form the manners, and attach the mind to virtue. The heart, cultivated by precept, and warned by example, improves in sensibility, which is the foundation of taste. By distinguishing the influence and scope of morality, and cherishing the ideas of benevolence, it acquires a habit of sympathy, which tenderly feels responsive, like the vibration of unisons, every touch of moral beauty. Hence it is that a man of a social heart, entended by the practice of virtue, is awakened to the most pathetic emotions by every uncommon instance of generosity, compassion, and greatness of soul. Is there any man so dead to sentiment, so lost to humanity, as to read unmoved the generous behavior of the Romans to the states of Greece, as it is recounted by Livy, or embellished by Thomson in his

poem of Liberty? Speaking of Greece in the decline of her power, when her freedom no longer existed, he says :—

As at her Isthmian games — a fading pomp —
Her full assembled youth innumerable swarmed,
On a tribunal raised FLAMINIUS sat :
A victor he, from the deep phalanx pierced
Of iron-coated Macedon, and back
The Grecian tyrant to his bounds repelled.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possessed, the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse,
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald, — “To the states of Greece
The Roman people unconfined restore
Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws :
Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw.”
The crowd, astonished half, and half informed,
Stared dubious round ; some questioned, some exclaimed,
(Like one who, dreaming between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy,) “Be that again —
Be that again proclaimed distinct and loud !”
Loud and distinct it was again proclaimed ;
And, still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devoured.
Awhile severe amazement held them mute,
Then, bursting broad, the boundless shout to heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstatic sprung !
On every hand rebellowed to their joy
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills. —
—— Like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace ;
Nor strained a slave : and loud acclaims till night
Round the proconsul's tent repeated rung.

To one acquainted with the genius of Greece, the character and disposition of that polished people, admired for science, renowned for an inextinguishable love of freedom, nothing can be more affecting than this instance of generous magnanimity of the Roman people, in restoring them unasked to the full fruition of those liberties which they had so unfortunately lost.

The mind of sensibility is equally struck by the generous confidence of Alexander, who drinks without hesitation the potion presented by his physician Philip, even after he had received intimation that poison was contained in the cup: a noble and pathetic scene, which hath acquired new dignity and expression under the inimitable pencil of a Le Sueur. Humanity is melted into tears of tender admiration by the deportment of Henry IV. of France, while his rebellious subjects compelled him to form the blockade of his capital. In chastising his enemies, he could not but remember they were his people; and knowing they were reduced to the extremity of famine, he generously connived at the methods practised to supply them with provision. Chancing one day to meet two peasants who had been detected in these practices as they were led to execution, they implored his clemency, declaring, in the sight of Heaven, they had no other way to procure subsistence for their wives and children; he pardoned them on the spot, and giving them all the money that was in his purse, "Henry of Bearne is poor," said he; "had he more money to afford, you should have it: go home to your families in

peace ; and remember your duty to God and your allegiance to your sovereign." Innumerable examples of the same kind may be selected from history both ancient and modern, the study of which we would therefore strenuously recommend.

Historical knowledge, indeed, becomes necessary on many other accounts, which in its place we will explain : but as the formation of the heart is of the first consequence, and should precede the cultivation of the understanding, such striking instances of superior virtue ought to be culled for the perusal of the young pupil, who will read them with eagerness, and revolve them with pleasure. Thus the young mind becomes enamoured of moral beauty, and the passions are listed on the side of humanity. Meanwhile, knowledge of a different species will go hand in hand with the advances of morality, and the understanding be gradually extended. Virtue and sentiment reciprocally assist each other, and both conduce to the improvement of perception. While the scholar's chief attention is employed in learning the Latin and Greek languages, and this is generally the task of childhood and early youth, it is even then the business of the preceptor to give his mind a turn for observation, to direct his powers of discernment, to point out the distinguishing marks of character, and dwell upon the charms of moral and intellectual beauty, as they may chance to occur in the classics that are used for his instruction. In reading Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch's Lives, even with a view to grammatical improvement

only, he will insensibly imbibe, and learn to compare, ideas of great importance. He will become enamoured of virtue and patriotism, and acquire a detestation for vice, cruelty, and corruption. The perusal of the Roman story in the works of Florus, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus will irresistibly engage his attention, expand his conception, cherish his memory, exercise his judgment, and warm him with a noble spirit of emulation. He will contemplate with love and admiration the disinterested candor of Aristides, surnamed the Just, whom the guilty cabals of his rival Themistocles exiled from his ungrateful country by a sentence of ostracism. He will be surprised to learn, that one of his fellow-citizens, an illiterate artisan, bribed by his enemies, chancing to meet him in the street without knowing his person, desired he would write Aristides on his shell (which was the method those plebeians used to vote against delinquents), when the innocent patriot wrote his own name without complaint or expostulation. He will with equal astonishment applaud the inflexible integrity of Fabricius, who preferred the poverty of innocence to all the pomp of affluence with which Pyrrhus endeavored to seduce him from the arms of his country. He will approve with transport the noble generosity of his soul in rejecting the proposal of that Prince's physician, who offered to take him off by poison; and in sending the caitiff bound to his sovereign, whom he would have so basely and cruelly betrayed.

In reading the ancient authors, even for the purposes of school education, the unformed taste will begin to

relish the irresistible energy, greatness, and sublimity of Homer ; the serene majesty, the melody, and pathos of Virgil ; the tenderness of Sappho and Tibullus ; the elegance and propriety of Terence ; the grace, vivacity, satire, and sentiment of Horace.

Nothing will more conduce to the improvement of the scholar in his knowledge of the languages, as well as in taste and morality, than his being obliged to translate choice parts and passages of the most approved classics, both poetry and prose, especially the latter : such as the orations of Demosthenes and Isocrates, the treatise of Longinus on the Sublime, the Commentaries of Cæsar, the Epistles of Cicero and the younger Pliny, and the two celebrated speeches in the Catilinarian conspiracy by Sallust. By this practice he will become more intimate with the beauties of the writing and the idioms of the language from which he translates ; at the same time, it will form his style, and, by exercising his talent of expression, make him a more perfect master of his mother tongue. Cicero tells us, that in translating two orations which the most celebrated orators of Greece pronounced against each other, he performed this task, not as a servile interpreter, but as an orator ; preserving the sentiments, forms, and figures of the original, but adapting the expression to the taste and manners of the Romans : “*In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omnium verborum vimque servavi,*” — “in which I did not think it was necessary to translate literally word for word, but I preserved the natural and full scope of

the whole." Of the same opinion was Horace, who says, in his Art of Poetry : —

Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres —

Nor word for word translate with painful care.

Nevertheless, in taking the liberty here granted, we are apt to run into the other extreme, and substitute equivalent thoughts and phrases, till hardly any features of the original remain. The metaphors of figures, especially in poetry, ought to be as religiously preserved as the images of painting, which we cannot alter or exchange without destroying, or injuring at least, the character and style of the original.

In this manner the preceptor will sow the seeds of that taste which will soon germinate, rise, blossom, and produce perfect fruit by dint of future care and cultivation. In order to restrain the luxuriancy of the young imagination, which is apt to run riot, to enlarge the stock of ideas, exercise the reason, and ripen the judgment, the pupil must be engaged in the severer study of science. He must learn geometry, which Plato recommends for strengthening the mind, and enabling it to think with precision. He must be made acquainted with geography and chronology, and trace philosophy through all her branches. Without geography and chronology he will not be able to acquire a distinct idea of history ; nor judge of the propriety of many interesting scenes, and a thousand illusions, that present themselves in the works of genius. Nothing

opens the mind so much as the researches of philosophy : they inspire us with sublime conceptions of the Creator, and subject, as it were, all nature to our command. These bestow that liberal turn of thinking, and in a great measure contribute to that universality in learning, by which a man of taste ought to be eminently distinguished. But history is the inexhaustible source from which he will derive his most useful knowledge respecting the progress of the human mind, the constitution of government, the rise and decline of empires, the revolution of arts, the variety of character, and the vicissitudes of fortune.

The knowledge of history enables the poet not only to paint characters, but also to describe magnificent and interesting scenes of battle and adventure. Not that the poet or painter ought to be restrained to the letter of historical truth. History represents what has really happened in nature ; the other arts exhibit what might have happened, with such exaggeration of circumstance and feature as may be deemed an improvement on nature : but this exaggeration must not be carried beyond the bounds of probability ; and these, generally speaking, the knowledge of history will ascertain. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find a man actually existing, whose proportions should answer to those of the Greek statue distinguished by the name of the Apollo of Belvedere, or to produce a woman similar in proportion of parts to the other celebrated piece called the Venus de Medicis ; therefore it may be truly affirmed, that they are not con-

formable to the real standard of nature : nevertheless, every artist will own, that they are the very archetypes of grace, elegance, and symmetry ; and every judging eye must behold them with admiration, as improvements on the lines and lineaments of nature. The truth is, the sculptor or statuary composed the various proportions in nature from a great number of different subjects, every individual of which he found imperfect or defective in some one particular, though beautiful in all the rest ; and from these observations, corroborated by taste and judgment, he formed an ideal pattern, according to which his idea was modelled, and produced in execution.

Everybody knows the story of Zeuxis, the famous painter of Heraclea, who, according to Pliny, invented the *chiaro oscuro*, or disposition of light and shade, among the ancients, and excelled all his contemporaries in the chromatique, or art of coloring. This great artist being employed to draw a perfect beauty in the character of Helen, to be placed in the temple of Juno, culled out five of the most beautiful damsels the city could produce, and selecting what was excellent in each, combined them in one picture according to the predisposition of his fancy, so that it shone forth an amazing model of perfection. In like manner every man of genius, regulated by true taste, entertains in his imagination an ideal beauty, conceived and cultivated as an improvement upon nature : and this we refer to the article of invention.

It is the business of art to imitate nature, but not

with a servile pencil ; and to choose those attitudes and dispositions only which are beautiful and engaging. With this view, we must avoid all disagreeable prospects of nature, which excite the ideas of abhorrence and disgust. For example, a painter would not find his account in exhibiting the resemblance of a dead carcase half consumed by vermin, or of swine wallowing in ordure, or of a beggar lousing himself on a dunghill, though these scenes should be painted never so naturally, and all the world must allow that the scenes were taken from nature, because the merit of the imitation would be greatly overbalanced by the vile choice of the artist. There are nevertheless many scenes of horror which please in the representation, from a certain interesting greatness, which we shall endeavor to explain when we come to consider the sublime.

Were we to judge every production by the rigorous rules of nature, we should reject the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Æneid* of Virgil, and every celebrated tragedy of antiquity and the present times, because there is no such thing in nature as a Hector or Turnus talking in hexameter, or an Othello in blank verse : we should condemn the *Hercules* of Sophocles, and the *Miser* of Molière, because we never knew a hero so strong as the one, or a wretch so sordid as the other. But if we consider poetry as an elevation of natural dialogue, as a delightful vehicle for conveying the noblest sentiments of heroism and patriot virtue, to regale the sense with the sounds of musical expression, while the

fancy is ravished with enchanting images, and the heart warmed to rapture and ecstasy, we must allow that poetry is a perfection to which nature would gladly aspire ; and that, though it surpasses, it does not deviate from her, provided the characters are marked with propriety, and sustained by genius. Characters, therefore, both in poetry and painting, may be a little over-charged, or exaggerated, without offering violence to nature ; nay, they must be exaggerated in order to be striking, and to preserve the idea of imitation, whence the reader and spectator derive, in many instances, their chief delight. If we meet a common acquaintance in the street, we see him without emotion ; but should we chance to spy his portrait well executed, we are struck with pleasing admiration. In this case the pleasure arises entirely from the imitation. We every day hear unmoved the natives of Ireland and Scotland speaking their own dialects ; but should an Englishman mimic either, we are apt to burst out into a loud laugh of applause, being surprised and tickled by the imitation alone ; though, at the same time, we cannot but allow that the imitation is imperfect. We are more affected by reading Shakspeare's description of Dover Cliff, and Otway's picture of the Old Hag, than we should be were we actually placed on the summit of the one, or met in reality with such a beldame as the other ; because in reading these descriptions we refer to our own experience, and perceive, with surprise, the justness of the imitations. But if it is so close as to be mistaken for

nature, the pleasure then will cease, because the *μίμησις*, or imitation, no longer appears.

Aristotle says, that all poetry and music is imitation, whether epic, tragic, or comic, whether vocal or instrumental, from the pipe or the lyre. He observes, that in man there is a propensity to imitate, even from his infancy; that the first perceptions of the mind are acquired by imitation; and seems to think, that the pleasure derived from imitation is the gratification of an appetite implanted by nature. We should rather think the pleasure it gives arises from the mind's contemplating that excellency of art, which thus rivals nature, and seems to vie with her in creating such a striking resemblance of her works. Thus the arts may be justly termed imitative, even in the article of invention: for, in forming a character, contriving an incident, and describing a scene, he must still keep nature in view, and refer every particular of his invention to her standard; otherwise his production will be destitute of truth and probability, without which the beauties of imitation cannot subsist. It will be a monster of incongruity, such as Horace alludes to in the beginning of his Epistle to the Pisos: —

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem mulier formosa superne;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis amici?

Suppose a painter to a human head
Should join a horse's neck, and wildly spread

The various plumage of the feather'd kind
O'er limbs of different beasts, absurdly join'd;
Or if he gave to view a beauteous maid,
Above the waist with every charm array'd,
Should a foul fish her lower parts unfold,
Would you not laugh such pictures to behold?

The magazine of nature supplies all those images which compose the most beautiful imitations. This the artist examines occasionally, as he would consult a collection of masterly sketches; and selecting particulars for his purpose, mingles the ideas with a kind of enthusiasm, or *τὸ θεῖον*, which is that gift of Heaven we call genius, and finally produces such a whole as commands admiration and applause.

THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS.

THE *Republic of Letters* is a very common expression among the Europeans ; and yet when applied to the learned of Europe is the most absurd that can be imagined ; since nothing is more unlike a republic than the society which goes by that name. From this expression one would be apt to imagine that the learned were united into a single body, joining their interests, and concurring in the same design. From this one might be apt to compare them to our literary societies in China, where each acknowledges a just subordination, and all contribute to build the temple of science, without attempting, from ignorance or envy, to obstruct each other.

But very different is the state of learning here : every member of this fancied republic is desirous of governing, and none willing to obey ; each looks upon his fellow as a rival, not an assistant in the same pursuit. They calumniate, they injure, they despise, they ridicule each other ; if one man writes a book that pleases, others shall write books to show that he might have given still greater pleasure, or should not have pleased. If one happens to hit upon something

new, there are numbers ready to assure the public that all this was no novelty to them or the learned ; that Cardanus, or Brunus, or some other author too dull to be generally read, had anticipated the discovery. Thus, instead of uniting like the members of a commonwealth, they are divided into almost as many factions as there are men ; and their jarring constitution, instead of being styled a republic of letters, should be entitled an anarchy of literature.

It is true, there are some of superior abilities, who reverence and esteem each other ; but their mutual admiration is not sufficient to shield off the contempt of the crowd. The wise are but few, and they praise with a feeble voice ; the vulgar are many, and roar in reproaches. The truly great seldom unite in societies ; have few meetings, no cabals ; the dunces hunt in full cry, till they have run down a reputation, and then snarl and fight with each other about dividing the spoil. Here you may see the compilers and the book-answerers of every month, when they have cut up some respectable name, most frequently reproaching each other with stupidity and dulness ; resembling the wolves of the Russian forest, who prey upon venison, or horse-flesh, when they can get it ; but in cases of necessity, lying in wait to devour each other. While they have new books to cut up, they make a hearty meal ; but if this resource should unhappily fail, then it is that critics eat up critics, and compilers rob from compilations.

Confucius observes, that it is the duty of the learned

to unite society more closely, and to persuade men to become citizens of the world ; but the authors I refer to are not only for disuniting society, but kingdoms also : if the English are at war with France, the dunces of France think it their duty to be at war with those of England. Thus Fréron, one of their first-rate scribblers, thinks proper to characterize all the English writers in the gross : “ Their whole merit,” says he, “ consists in exaggeration, and often in extravagance : correct their pieces as you please, there still remains a leaven which corrupts the whole. They sometimes discover genius, but not the smallest share of taste : England is not a soil for the plants of genius to thrive in.” This is open enough, with not the least adulation in the picture : but hear what a Frenchman of acknowledged abilities says upon the same subject : “ I am at a loss to determine in what we excel the English, or where they excel us ; when I compare the merits of both in any one species of literary composition, so many reputable and pleasing writers present themselves from either country, that my judgment rests in suspense : I am pleased with the disquisition, without finding the object of my inquiry.” But lest you should think the French alone are faulty in this respect, hear how an English journalist delivers his sentiments of them : “ We are amazed,” says he, “ to find so many works translated from the French, while we have such numbers neglected of our own. In our opinion, notwithstanding their fame throughout the rest of Europe, the French are the most contemptible

reasoners (we had almost said writers) that can be imagined. However, nevertheless, excepting," etc. Another English writer, Shaftesbury, if I remember, on the contrary, says that the French authors are pleasing and judicious, more clear, more methodical and entertaining, than those of his own country.

From these opposite pictures you perceive that the good authors of either country praise, and the bad revile, each other; and yet, perhaps, you will be surprised that indifferent writers should thus be the most apt to censure, as they have the most to apprehend from recrimination: you may, perhaps, imagine, that such as are possessed of fame themselves should be most ready to declare their opinions, since what they say might pass for decision. But the truth happens to be, that the great are solicitous only of raising their own reputations, while the opposite class, alas! are solicitous of bringing every reputation down to a level with their own.

But let us acquit them of malice and envy. A critic is often guided by the same motives that direct his author: the author endeavors to persuade us, that he has written a good book; the critic is equally solicitous to show that he could write a better had he thought proper. A critic is a being possessed of all the vanity, but not the genius, of a scholar: incapable, from his native weakness, of lifting himself from the ground, he applies to contiguous merit for support; makes the sportive sallies of another's imagination his serious employment; pretends to take our feelings

under his care ; teaches where to condemn, where to lay the emphasis of praise ; and may with as much justice be called a man of taste as the Chinese who measures his wisdom by the length of his nails.

If, then, a book, spirited or humorous, happens to appear in the republic of letters, several critics are in waiting to bid the public not to laugh at a single line of it ; for themselves had read it, and they know what is proper to excite laughter. Other critics contradict the fulminations of this tribunal, call them all spiders, and assure the public, that they ought to laugh without restraint. Another set are in the meantime quietly employed in writing notes to the book, intended to show the particular passages to be laughed at : when these are out, others still there are who write notes upon notes : thus a single new book employs not only the paper-makers, the printers, the pressmen, the bookbinders, the hawkers, but twenty critics, and as many compilers. In short, the body of the learned may be compared to a Persian army, where there are many pioneers, several sutlers, numberless servants, women and children in abundance, and but few soldiers.

LITERARY TRIBUNALS.

I HAVE frequently admired the manner of criticising in China, where the learned are assembled in a body to judge of every new publication ; to examine the merits of the work, without knowing the circumstances of the author ; and then to usher it into the world with proper marks of respect or reprobation.

In England there are no such tribunals erected ; but if a man thinks proper to be a judge of genius, few will be at the pains to contradict his pretensions. If any choose to be critics, it is but saying they are critics, and from that time forward they become invested with full power and authority over every caitiff who aims at their instruction or entertainment.

As almost every member of society has, by this means, a vote in literary transactions, it is no way surprising to find the rich leading the way here, as in other common concerns of life ; to see them either bribing the numerous herd of voters by their interest, or browbeating them by their authority.

A great man says, at his table, that such a book is *no bad thing*. Immediately the praise is carried off by five flatterers, to be dispersed at twelve different

coffee-houses, from whence it circulates, still improving as it proceeds, through forty-five houses where cheaper liquors are sold ; from thence it is carried away by the honest tradesman to his own fireside, where the applause is eagerly caught up by his wife and children, who have been long taught to regard his judgment as the standard of perfection. Thus, when we have traced a wide-extended literary reputation up to its original source, we shall find it derived from some great man, who has perhaps received all his education and English from a tutor of Berne or a dancing master of Picardy.

The English are a people of good sense, and I am the more surprised to find them swayed in their opinions by men who often from their very education are incompetent judges. Men who, being always bred in affluence, see the world only on one side, are surely improper judges of human nature. They may, indeed, describe a ceremony, a pageant, or a ball ; but how can they pretend to dive into the secrets of the human heart, who have been nursed up only in forms, and daily behold nothing but the same insipid adulation smiling upon every face ? Few of them have been bred in that best of schools, the school of adversity ; and, by what I can learn, fewer still have been bred in any school at all.

From such a description one would think that a droning duke, or a dowager duchess, was not possessed of more just pretensions to taste than persons of less quality ; and yet whatever the one or the other may

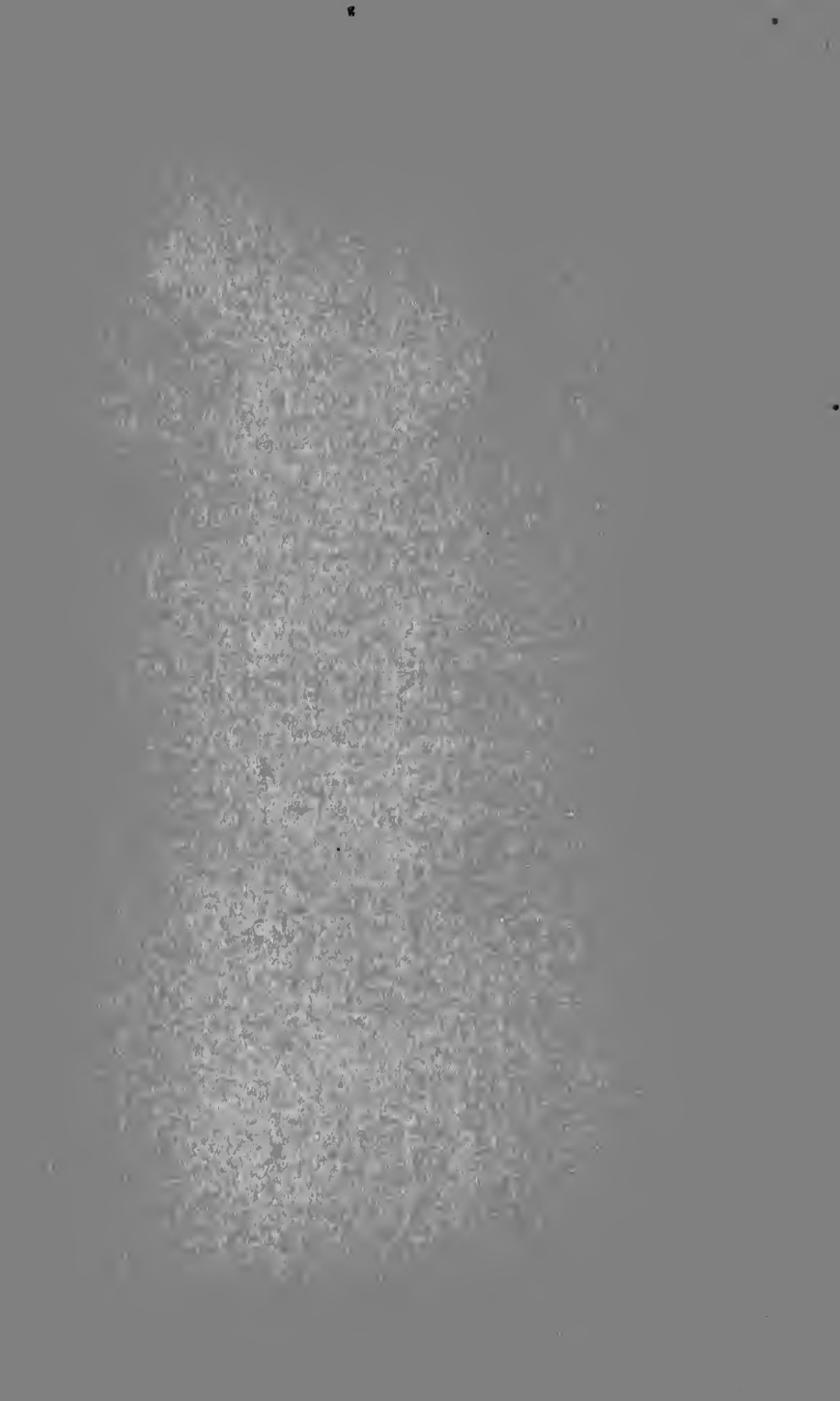
write or praise shall pass for perfection, without farther examination. A nobleman has but to take a pen, ink, and paper, write away through three large volumes, and then sign his name to the titlepage ; though the whole might have been before more disgusting than his own rent-roll, yet signing his name and title gives value to the deed, title being alone equivalent to taste, imagination, and genius.

As soon as a piece, therefore, is published, the first questions are, Who is the author? Does he keep a coach? Where lies his estate? What sort of a table does he keep? If he happens to be poor and unqualified for such a scrutiny, he and his works sink into irremediable obscurity, and too late he finds, that having fed upon turtle is a more ready way to fame, than having digested Tully.

The poor devil against whom fashion has set its face vainly alleges that he has been bred in every part of Europe where knowledge was to be sold ; that he has grown pale in the study of nature and himself. His works may please upon the perusal, but his pretensions to fame are entirely disregarded. He is treated like a fiddler, whose music, though liked, is not much praised, because he lives by it ; while a gentleman performer, though the most wretched scraper alive, throws the audience into raptures. The fiddler, indeed, may in such a case console himself by thinking, that while the other goes off with all the praise, he runs away with all the money. But here the parallel drops ; for while the nobleman triumphs in un-

merited applause, the author by profession steals off with — nothing.

The poor, therefore, here, who draw their pens auxiliary to the laws of their country, must think themselves very happy if they find, not fame, but forgiveness: and yet they are hardly treated; for as every country grows more polite, the press becomes more useful, and writers become more necessary as readers are supposed to increase. In a polished society, that man, though in rags, who has the power of enforcing virtue from the press, is of more real use than forty stupid brahmins, or bonzes, or guebres, though they preached never so often, never so loud, or never so long. That man, though in rags, who is capable of deceiving even indolence into wisdom, and who professes amusement, while he aims at reformation, is more useful in refined society than twenty cardinals, with all their scarlet, and tricked out in all the fopperies of scholastic finery.



ON VARIOUS MATTERS.



RECOMPENSES OF MEDIOCRITY.

THE princes of Europe have found out a manner of rewarding their subjects who have behaved well, by presenting them with about two yards of blue ribbon, which is worn about the shoulder. They who are honored with this mark of distinction are called knights, and the king himself is always the head of the order. This is a very frugal method of recompensing the most important services ; and it is very fortunate for kings that their subjects are satisfied with such trifling rewards. Should a nobleman happen to lose his leg in a battle, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, and he is paid for the loss of his limb. Should an ambassador spend all his paternal fortune in supporting the honor of his country abroad, the king presents him with two yards of ribbon, which is to be considered as an equivalent to his estate. In short, while an European king has a yard of blue or green ribbon left, he need be under no apprehensions of wanting statesmen, generals, and soldiers.

I cannot sufficiently admire those kingdoms in which men with large patrimonial estates are willing thus to undergo real hardships for empty favors. A person,

already possessed of a competent fortune, who undertakes to enter the career of ambition, feels many real inconveniences from his station, while it procures him no real happiness that he was not possessed of before. He could eat, drink, and sleep, before he became a courtier, as well, perhaps better, than when invested with his authority. He could command flatterers in a private station, as well as in his public capacity, and indulge at home every favorite inclination, uncensured and unseen by the people.

What real good, then, does an addition to a fortune already sufficient procure? Not any. Could the great man, by having his fortune increased, increase also his appetites, then precedence might be attended with real amusement.

Was he, by having his one thousand made two, thus enabled to enjoy two wives, or eat two dinners, then indeed he might be excused for undergoing some pain in order to extend the sphere of his enjoyments. But, on the contrary, he finds his desire for pleasure often lessen, as he takes pains to be able to improve it; and his capacity of enjoyment diminishes as his fortune happens to increase.

Instead, therefore, of regarding the great with envy, I generally consider them with some share of compassion. I look upon them as a set of good-natured, misguided people, who are indebted to us, and not to themselves, for all the happiness they enjoy. For our pleasure, and not their own, they sweat under a cumbrous heap of finery; for our pleasure, the lackeyed

train, the slow-parading pageant, with all the gravity of grandeur, moves in review : a single coat, or a single footman, answers all the purposes of the most indolent refinement as well ; and those who have twenty, may be said to keep one for their own pleasure, and the other nineteen merely for ours. So true is the observation of Confucius, "That we take greater pains to persuade others that we are happy, than in endeavoring to think so ourselves."

But though this desire of being seen, of being made the subject of discourse, and of supporting the dignities of an exalted station, be troublesome enough to the ambitious, yet it is well for society that there are men thus willing to exchange ease and safety for danger and a ribbon. We lose nothing by their vanity, and it would be unkind to endeavor to deprive a child of its rattle. If a duke or a duchess are willing to carry a long train for our entertainment, so much the worse for themselves ; if they choose to exhibit in public, with a hundred lackeys and mamelukes in their equipage, for our entertainment, still so much the worse for themselves ; it is the spectators alone who give and receive the pleasure ; they only are the sweating figures that swell the pageant.

A mandarine, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze, who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarine. "Friend, I never

gave thee any of my jewels." — "No," replied the other ; "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself ; so there is no difference between us, except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire."

HAPPINESS IN A GREAT MEASURE DEPENDENT ON CONSTITUTION.

WHEN I reflect on the unambitious retirement in which I passed the earlier part of my life in the country, I cannot avoid feeling some pain in thinking that those happy days are never to return. In that retreat all nature seemed capable of affording pleasure : I then made no refinements on happiness, but could be pleased with the most awkward efforts of rustic mirth ; thought cross purposes the highest stretch of human wit, and questions and commands the most rational amusement for spending the evening. Happy could so charming an illusion still continue. I find age and knowledge only contribute to sour our dispositions. My present enjoyments may be more refined, but they are infinitely less pleasing. The pleasure Garrick gives can no way compare to that I have received from a country wag, who imitated a Quaker's sermon. The music of Mattei is dissonance to what I felt when our old dairy-maid sang me into tears with Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night, or the cruelty of Barbara Allen.

Writers of every age have endeavored to show that

pleasure is in us, and not in the objects offered for our amusement. If the soul be happily disposed, everything becomes a subject of entertainment, and distress will almost want a name. Every occurrence passes in review like the figures of a procession : some may be awkward, others ill-dressed ; but none but a fool is for this enraged with the master of the ceremonies.

I remember to have once seen a slave in a fortification in Flanders, who appeared no way touched with his situation. He was maimed, deformed, and chained ; obliged to toil from the appearance of day till night-fall, and condemned to this for life ; yet with all these circumstances of apparent wretchedness, he sang, would have danced, but that he wanted a leg, and appeared the merriest, happiest man of all the garrison. What a practical philosopher was here ! an happy constitution supplied philosophy, and though seemingly destitute of wisdom, he was really wise. No reading or study had contributed to disenchant the fairy-land around him. Everything furnished him with an opportunity of mirth ; and though some thought him, from his insensibility, a fool, he was such an idiot as philosophers might wish in vain to imitate.

They who, like him, can place themselves on that side of the world in which everything appears in a ridiculous or pleasing light, will find something in every occurrence to excite their good humor. The most calamitous events, either to themselves or others,

can bring no new affliction: the whole world is to them a theatre, on which comedies only are acted. All the bustle of heroism or the rants of ambition serve only to heighten the absurdity of the scene, and make the humor more poignant. They feel, in short, as little anguish at their own distress, or the complaints of others, as the undertaker, though dressed in black, feels sorrow at a funeral.

Of all the men I ever read of, the famous Cardinal de Retz possessed this happiness of temper in the highest degree. As he was a man of gallantry, and despised all that wore the pedantic appearance of philosophy, wherever pleasure was to be sold he was generally foremost to raise the auction. Being an universal admirer of the fair sex, when he found one lady cruel, he generally fell in love with another, from whom he expected a more favorable reception; if she too rejected his addresses, he never thought of retiring into deserts, or pining in hopeless distress: he persuaded himself that, instead of loving the lady, he only fancied he had loved her, and so all was well again. When Fortune wore her angriest look, when he at last fell into the power of his most deadly enemy, Cardinal Mazarine, and was confined a close prisoner in the Castle of Valenciennes, he never attempted to support his distress by wisdom or philosophy, for he pretended to neither. He laughed at himself and his persecutor, and seemed infinitely pleased at his new situation. In this mansion of distress, though secluded from his friends, though denied all the amusements,

and even the conveniences, of life, teased every hour by the impertinence of wretches who were employed to guard him, he still retained his good humor, laughed at all their little spite, and carried the jest so far as to be revenged, by writing the life of his gaoler.

All that philosophy can teach is to be stubborn or sullen under misfortunes. The Cardinal's example will instruct us to be merry in circumstances of the highest affliction. It matters not whether our good humor be construed by others into insensibility, or even idiotism : it is happiness to ourselves ; and none but a fool would measure his satisfaction by what the world thinks of it.

Dick Wildgoose was one of the happiest silly fellows I ever knew. He was of the number of those good-natured creatures that are said to do no harm to any but themselves. Whenever Dick fell into any misery, he usually called it "seeing life." If his head was broke by a chairman, or his pocket picked by a sharper, he comforted himself by imitating the Hibernian dialect of the one, or the more fashionable cant of the other. Nothing came amiss to Dick. His inattention to money matters had incensed his father to such a degree, that all the intercession of friends in his favor was fruitless. The old gentleman was on his deathbed. The whole family, and Dick among the number, gathered round him. "I leave my second son Andrew," said the expiring miser, "my whole estate, and desire him to be frugal." Andrew in a sorrowful tone, as is usual on these occasions, "prayed

Heaven to prolong his life and health to enjoy it himself." — "I recommend Simon, my third son, to the care of his elder brother, and leave him beside four thousand pounds." — "Ah, father !" cried Simon, (in great affliction to be sure,) "may Heaven give you life and health to enjoy it yourself !" At last, turning to poor Dick, "As for you, you have always been a sad dog — you'll never come to good, you'll never be rich ; I'll leave you a shilling to buy an halter." — "Ah, father !" cries Dick, without any emotion, "may Heaven give you life and health to enjoy it yourself !" This was all the trouble the loss of fortune gave this thoughtless, imprudent creature. However, the tenderness of an uncle recompensed the neglect of a father ; and Dick is not only excessively good-humored, but competently rich.

The world, in short, may cry out at a bankrupt who appears at a ball ; at an author who laughs at the public which pronounces him a dunce ; at a general who smiles at the reproach of the vulgar ; or the lady who keeps her good humor in spite of scandal : but such is the wisest behavior they can possibly assume. It is certainly a better way to oppose calamity by dissipation, than to take up the arms of reason or resolution to oppose it : by the first method we forget our miseries, by the last we only conceal them from others. By struggling with misfortunes we are sure to receive some wounds in the conflict : the only method to come off victorious is by running away.

ON THE INSTABILITY OF WORLDLY GRANDEUR.

AN alehouse keeper near Islington, who had long lived at the sign of the French King, upon the commencement of the last war with France pulled down his old sign, and put up the Queen of Hungary. Under the influence of her red face and golden sceptre, he continued to sell ale till she was no longer the favorite of his customers; he changed her therefore, some time ago, for the King of Prussia, who may probably be changed in turn for the next great man that shall be set up for vulgar admiration.

Our publican in this imitates the great exactly, who deal out their figures, one after the other, to the gazing crowd beneath them. When we have sufficiently wondered at one, that is taken in, and another exhibited in its room, which seldom holds its station long, for the mob are ever pleased with variety.

I must own I have such an indifferent opinion of the vulgar, that I am ever led to suspect that merit which raises their shout; at least I am certain to find those great and sometimes good men, who find satisfaction in such acclamations, made worse by it; and history

has too frequently taught me, that the head which has grown this day giddy with the roar of the million has the very next been fixed upon a pole.

As Alexander VI. was entering a little town in the neighborhood of Rome, which had just been evacuated by the enemy, he perceived the townsmen busy in the market-place in pulling down from a gibbet a figure which had been designed to represent himself. There were also some knocking down a neighboring statue of one of the Orsini family, with whom he was at war, in order to put Alexander's effigy, when taken down, in its place. It is possible a man who knew less of the world would have condemned the adulation of those barefaced flatterers ; but Alexander seemed pleased at their zeal, and, turning to Borgia his son, said with a smile, *Vides, mi fili, quam leve discrimen patibulum inter et statuam.* — "You see, my son, the small difference between a gibbet and a statue." If the great could be taught any lesson, this might serve to teach them upon how weak a foundation their glory stands, which is built upon popular applause ; for as such praise what seems like merit, they as quickly condemn what has only the appearance of guilt.

Popular glory is a perfect coquette : her lovers must toil, feel every inquietude, indulge every caprice, and perhaps at last be jilted into the bargain. True glory, on the other hand, resembles a woman of sense : her admirers must play no tricks ; they feel no great anxiety, for they are sure in the end of being rewarded in proportion to their merit. When Swift used to appear

in public, he generally had the mob shouting in his train. "Pox take these fools!" he would say: "how much joy might all this bawling give my Lord Mayor!"

We have seen those virtues which have, while living, retired from the public eye, generally transmitted to posterity as the truest objects of admiration and praise. Perhaps the character of the late Duke of Marlborough may one day be set up, even above that of his more talked of predecessor; since an assemblage of all the mild and amiable virtues is far superior to those vulgarly called the great ones. I must be pardoned for this short tribute to the memory of a man who, while living, would as much detest to receive anything that wore the appearance of flattery, as I should to offer it.

I know not how to turn so trite a subject out of the beaten road of commonplace, except by illustrating it rather by the assistance of my memory than my judgment, and, instead of making reflections, by telling a story.

A Chinese who had long studied the works of Confucius, who knew the characters of fourteen thousand words, and could read a great part of every book that came in his way, once took it into his head to travel into Europe, and observe the customs of a people whom he thought not very much inferior even to his own countrymen in the arts of refining upon every pleasure. Upon his arrival at Amsterdam, his passion for letters naturally led him to a bookseller's shop; and, as he could speak a little Dutch, he civilly asked the bookseller for the works of the immortal Ilixofou.

The bookseller assured him he had never heard the book mentioned before. "What ! have you never heard of that immortal poet ?" returned the other, much surprised ; " that light of the eyes, that favorite of kings, that rose of perfection ! I suppose you know nothing of the immortal Fipsihihi, second cousin to the moon ?" — " Nothing at all, indeed, sir," returned the other. — " Alas !" cries our traveller, " to what purpose, then, has one of these fasted to death, and the other offered himself up as a sacrifice to the Tartarean enemy, to gain a renown which has never travelled beyond the precincts of China !"

There is scarcely a village in Europe, and not one university, that is not thus furnished with its little great men. The head of a petty corporation, who opposes the designs of a prince who would tyrannically force his subjects to save their best clothes for Sundays — the puny pedant who finds one undiscovered property in the polype, describes an unheeded process in the skeleton of a mole, and whose mind, like his microscope, perceives nature only in detail — the rhymmer who makes smooth verses, and paints to our imagination when he should only speak to our hearts, — all equally fancy themselves walking forward to immortality, and desire the crowd behind them to look on. The crowd takes them at their word. Patriot, philosopher, and poet are shouted in their train. Where was there ever so much merit seen ? no times so important as our own ! ages yet unborn shall gaze with wonder and applause ! To such music the important pigmy moves

forward, bustling and swelling, and aptly compared to a puddle in a storm.

I have lived to see generals who once had crowds hallooing after them wherever they went, who were praised by newspapers and magazines, those echoes of the voice of the vulgar, and yet they have long sunk into merited obscurity, with scarcely even an epitaph left to flatter. A few years ago the herring fishery employed all Grub Street ; it was the topic in every coffee-house, and the burden of every ballad. We were to drag up oceans of gold from the bottom of the sea ; we were to supply all Europe with herrings upon our own terms. At present we hear no more of all this. We have fished up very little gold that I can learn ; nor do we furnish the world with herrings, as was expected. Let us wait but a few years longer, and we shall find all our expectations an herring fishery.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LIFE OF
RICHARD NASH, ESQ.

PREFACE.

THE following Memoir is neither calculated to inflame the reader's passions with descriptions of gallantry, nor to gratify his malevolence with details of scandal. The amours of coxcombs and the pursuits of debauchees are as destitute of novelty to attract us as they are of variety to entertain; they still present us but the same picture, a picture we have seen a thousand times repeated. The life of Richard Nash is incapable of supplying any entertainment of this nature to a prurient curiosity. Though it was passed in the very midst of debauchery, he practised but few of those vices he was often obliged to assent to. Though he lived where gallantry was the capital pursuit, he was never known to favor it by his example, and what authority he had was set to oppose it. Instead, therefore, of a romantic history filled with warm pictures and fanciful adventures, the reader of the following account must rest satisfied with a genuine and candid recital compiled from the papers he left behind, and others equally authentic; a recital neither written with a spirit of satire nor panegyric, and with scarcely any other art than that of arranging the materials in their natural order.

But though little art has been used, it is hoped that some entertainment may be collected from the life of a person so much talked of, and yet so little known, as Mr. Nash. The history of a man who for more than fifty years presided over the pleasures of a polite kingdom, and whose life, though without anything to surprise, was ever marked with singularity, deserves the attention of the present age; the pains he took in pursuing pleasure, and the solemnity he assumed in adjusting trifles, may one day claim the smile of posterity. At least

such a history is well calculated to supply a vacant hour with innocent amusement, however it may fail to open the heart, or improve the understanding.

Yet his life, how trifling soever it may appear to the inattentive, was not without its real advantages to the public. He was the first who diffused a desire of society and an easiness of address among a whole people, who were formerly censured by foreigners for a reservedness of behavior and an awkward timidity in their first approaches. He first taught a familiar intercourse among strangers at Bath and Tunbridge, which still subsists among them. That ease and open access first acquired there, our gentry brought back to the metropolis, and thus the whole kingdom by degrees became more refined by lessons originally derived from him.

Had it been my design to have made this history more pleasing at the expense of truth, it had been easily performed; but I chose to describe the man as he was, not such as imagination could have helped in completing his picture; he will be found to have been a weak man, governing weaker subjects, and may be considered as resembling a monarch of Cappadocia, whom Cicero somewhere calls, "the little king of a little people."

But while I have been careful in describing the monarch, his dominions have claimed no small share of my attention. I have given an exact account of the rise, regulation, and nature of the amusements of the city of Bath; how far Nash contributed to establish and refine them, and what pleasure a stranger may expect there upon his arrival. Such anecdotes as are at once true and worth preserving are produced in their order, and some stories are added, which, though commonly known, more necessarily belong to this history than to the places from whence they have been extracted. But it is needless to point out the pains that have been taken, or the entertainment that may be expected from the perusal of this performance. It is but an indifferent way to gain the reader's esteem, to be my own panegyrist; nor is this preface so much designed to lead him to beauties, as to demand pardon for defects.

LIFE OF RICHARD NASH, ESQ.

HISTORY owes its excellence more to the writer's manner than to the materials of which it is composed. The intrigues of courts, or the devastation of armies, are regarded by the remote spectator with as little attention as the squabbles of a village, or the fate of a malefactor, that fall under his own observation. The great and the little, as they have the same senses and the same affections, generally present the same picture to the hand of the draughtsman : and whether the hero or the clown be the subject of the memoir, it is only man that appears with all his native minuteness about him ; for nothing very great was ever yet formed from the little materials of humanity.

Thus no one can properly be said to write history, but he who understands the human heart, and its whole train of affections and follies. Those affections and follies are properly the materials he has to work upon. The relations of great events may surprise indeed ; they may be calculated to instruct those very few who govern the million beneath : but the generality of mankind find the most real improvement from relations which are levelled to the general surface of

life, which tell—not how men learned to conquer, but how they endeavored to live—not how they gained the shout of the admiring crowd, but how they acquired the esteem of their friends and acquaintance.

Every man's own life would perhaps furnish the most pleasing materials for history, if he only had candor enough to be sincere, and skill enough to select such parts as once making him more prudent, might serve to render his readers more cautious. There are few who do not prefer a page of Montaigne or Colley Cibber, who candidly tell us what they thought of the world and the world thought of them, to the more stately memoirs and transactions of Europe, where we see kings pretending to immortality, that are now almost forgotten, and statesmen planning frivolous negotiations that scarcely outlive the signing.

It were to be wished that ministers and kings were left to write their own histories: they are truly useful to few but themselves; but for men who are contented with more humble stations, I fancy such truths only are serviceable as may conduct them safely through life. That knowledge which we can turn to our real benefit should be most eagerly pursued. Treasures which we cannot use but little increase the happiness or even the pride of the possessor.

I profess to write the history of a man placed in the middle rank of life; of one whose vices and virtues were open to the eye of the most undiscerning spectator; who was placed in public view without power to repress censure or command adulation; who had too

much merit not to become remarkable, yet too much folly to arrive at greatness. I attempt the character of one who was just such a man as probably you or I may be ; but with this difference, that he never performed an action which the world did not know, or ever formed a wish which he did not take pains to divulge. In short, I have chosen to write the life of the noted Mr. Nash, as it will be the delineation of a mind without disguise, of a man ever assiduous without industry, and pleasing to his superiors without any superiority of genius or understanding.

Yet, if there be any who think the subject of too little importance to command attention, and who would rather gaze at the actions of the great than be directed in guiding their own, I have one undeniable claim to their attention. Mr. Nash was himself a King. In this particular, perhaps no biographer has been so happy as I. They who are for a delineation of men and manners may find some satisfaction that way, and those who delight in adventures of kings and queens may perhaps find their hopes satisfied in another.

It is a matter of very little importance who were the parents, or what was the education, of a man who owed so little of his advancement to either. He seldom boasted of family or learning, and his father's name and circumstances were so little known, that Dr. Cheyne used frequently to say that Nash had no father. The Duchess of Marlborough one day rallying him in public company upon the obscurity of his birth, compared him to Gil Blas, who was ashamed of his father. "No,

madam," replied Nash, "I seldom mention my father in company; not because I have any reason to be ashamed of him, but because he has some reason to be ashamed of me."

However, though such anecdotes be immaterial, to go on in the usual course of history, it may be proper to observe, that RICHARD NASH, Esq., the subject of this memoir, was born in the town of Swansea, in Glamorganshire, on the 18th of October, in the year 1674. His father was a gentleman whose principal income arose from a partnership in a glass-house; his mother was niece to Colonel Poyer, who was killed by Oliver Cromwell, for defending Pembroke Castle against the rebels. He was educated under Mr. Maddocks at Carmarthen School, and from thence sent to Jesus College, Oxford, in order to prepare him for the study of the law. His father had strained his little income to give his son such an education; but from the boy's natural vivacity, he hoped a recompense from his future preferment. In college, however, he soon showed that though much might be expected from his genius, nothing could be hoped from his industry. A mind strongly turned to pleasure always is first seen at the university: there the youth first finds himself freed from the restraint of tutors, and being treated by his friends in some measure as a man, assumes the passions and desires of riper age, and discovers in the boy what are likely to be the affections of his maturity.

The first method Mr. Nash took to distinguish himself at college was not by application to study, but by

his assiduity to intrigue. In the neighborhood of every university there are girls who with some beauty, some coquetry, and little fortune, lie upon the watch for every raw youth, more inclined to make love than to study. Our hero was quickly caught, and went through all the mazes and adventures of a college intrigue, before he was seventeen : he offered marriage, the offer was accepted, but the whole affair coming to the knowledge of his tutors, his happiness, or perhaps his future misery, was prevented, and he was sent home from college, with necessary advice to him, and proper instructions to his father.

When a man knows his power over the fair sex, he generally commences their admirer for the rest of life. That triumph which he obtains over one only makes him the slave of another, and thus he proceeds conquering and conquered, to the closing of the scene. The army seemed the most likely profession in which to display this inclination for gallantry ; he therefore purchased a pair of colors, commenced a professed admirer of the sex, and dressed to the very edge of his finances. But the life of a soldier is more pleasing to the spectator at a distance than to the person who makes the experiment. Nash soon found that a red coat alone would never succeed, that the company of the fair sex is not to be procured without expense, and that his scanty commission could never procure him the proper reimbursements. He found, too, that the profession of arms required attendance and duty, and often encroached upon those hours he could have

wished to dedicate to softer purposes. In short, he soon became disgusted with the life of a soldier, quitted the army, entered his name as a student in the Temple books, and here went to the very summit of second-rate luxury. Though very poor, he was very fine ; he spread the little gold he had in the most ostentatious manner, and though the gilding was but thin, he laid it on as far as it would go. They who know the town cannot be unacquainted with such a character as I describe ; one who, though he may have dined in private upon a banquet served cold from a cook's shop, shall dress at six for the side box ; one of those whose wants are only known to their laundress and tradesmen, and their fine clothes to half the nobility ; who spend more in chair hire than housekeeping, and prefer a bow from a lord to a dinner from a commoner.

In this manner Nash spent some years about town, till at last, his genteel appearance, his constant civility, and still more, his assiduity, gained him the acquaintance of several persons qualified to lead the fashion both by birth and fortune. To gain the friendship of the young nobility, little more is requisite than much submission and very fine clothes ; dress has a mechanical influence upon the mind, and we naturally are awed into respect and esteem at the elegance of those whom even our reason would teach us to contemn. He seemed early sensible of human weakness in this respect ; he brought a person genteelly dressed to every assembly : he always made one of those who are called very good company, and assurance gave him an air of elegance and ease.

When King William was upon the throne, Mr. Nash was a member of the Middle Temple. It had been long customary for the Inns of Court to entertain our monarchs upon their accession to the crown, or some such remarkable occasion, with a revel and pageant. In the earlier periods of our history, poets were the conductors of these entertainments: plays were exhibited, and complimentary verses were then written; but by degrees the pageant alone was continued, Sir John Davis being the last poet that wrote verses upon such an occasion, in the reign of James I.

This ceremony, which has been at length totally discontinued, was last exhibited in honor of King William, and Mr. Nash was chosen to conduct the whole with proper decorum. He was then but a very young man; but we see at how early an age he was thought proper to guide the amusements of his country, and be the *Arbiter Elegantiarum* of his time; we see how early he gave proofs of that spirit of regularity for which he afterwards became famous, and showed an attention to those little circumstances, of which, though the observance be trifling, the neglect has often interrupted men of the greatest abilities in the progress of their fortunes.

In conducting this entertainment, Nash had an opportunity of exhibiting all his abilities, and King William was so well satisfied with his performance, that he made him an offer of knighthood. This, however, he thought proper to refuse; which in a person of his disposition seems strange. "Please your Majesty,"

replied he, when the offer was made him, "if you intend to make me a knight, I wish it may be one of your Poor Knights of Windsor, and then I shall have a fortune at least able to support my title." Yet we do not find that the King took the hint of increasing his fortune ; perhaps he could not ; he had at that time numbers to oblige, and he never cared to give money without important services.

But though Nash acquired no riches by his late office, yet he gained many friends, or, what is more easily obtained, many acquaintances, who often answer the end as well. In the populous city where he resided, to be known was almost synonymous with being in the road to fortune. How many little things do we see, without merit or without friends, push themselves forward into public notice, and by self-advertising attract the attention of the day ! The wise despise them, but the public are not all wise. Thus they succeed, rise upon the wing of folly or of fashion, and by their success give a new sanction to effrontery.

But besides his assurance, Mr. Nash had in reality some merit and some virtues. He was, if not a brilliant, at least an easy companion. He never forgot good manners, even in the highest warmth of familiarity, and, as I hinted before, never went in a dirty shirt to disgrace the table of his patron or his friend. These qualifications might make the furniture of his head ; but for his heart, that seemed an assemblage of the virtues which display an honest, benevolent mind,

with the vices which spring from too much good-nature. He had pity for every creature's distress, but wanted prudence in the application of his benefits. He had generosity for the wretched in the highest degree, at a time when his creditors complained of his justice. He often spoke falsehoods, but never had any of his harmless tales tinctured with malice.

An instance of his humanity is told us in *The Spectator*, though his name is not mentioned. When he was to give in his accounts to the Masters of the Temple, among other articles, he charged "For making one man happy, 10*l*." Being questioned about the meaning of so strange an item, he frankly declared, that happening to overhear a poor man declare to his wife and a large family of children that 10*l*. would make him happy, he could not avoid trying the experiment. He added, that if they did not choose to acquiesce in his charge, he was ready to refund the money. The Masters, struck with such an uncommon instance of good-nature, publicly thanked him for his benevolence, and desired that the sum might be doubled, as a proof of their satisfaction.

Another instance of his unaccountable generosity, and I shall proceed. In some transactions with one of his friends, Nash was brought in debtor twenty pounds. His friend frequently asked for the money, and was as often denied. He found at last that assiduity was likely to have no effect, and therefore contrived an honorable method of getting back his money without dissolving the friendship that subsisted between them.

One day, returning from Nash's chamber with the usual assurance of being paid to-morrow, he went to one of their mutual acquaintance, and related the frequent disappointments he had received, and the little hopes he had of being ever paid. "My design," continues he, "is that you should go and try to borrow twenty pounds from Nash, and bring me the money. I am apt to think he will lend to you, though he will not pay me. Perhaps we may extort from his generosity what I have failed to receive from his justice." His friend obeyed, and going to Nash, assured him, that unless relieved by his friendship, he should certainly be undone; he wanted to borrow twenty pounds, and had tried all his acquaintance without success. Nash, who had but some minutes before refused to pay a just debt, was in raptures at thus giving an instance of his friendship, and instantly lent what was required. Immediately upon the receipt, the pretended borrower goes to the real creditor, and gives him the money, who met Mr. Nash the day after. Our hero upon seeing him immediately began his usual excuses, that the billiard-room had stripped him; that he was never so damnably out of cash, but that in a few days — "My dear sir, be under no uneasiness," replied the other, "I would not interrupt your tranquillity for the world; you lent twenty pounds yesterday to our friend of the back stairs, and he lent it to me; give him your receipt, and you shall have mine." — "Perdition seize thee!" cried Nash, "thou hast been too many for me. You demanded a debt, he asked a favor; to pay thee would

not increase our friendship ; but to lend him was procuring a new friend, by conferring a new obligation."

Whether men, at the time I am now talking of, had more wit than at present, I will not take upon me to determine ; but certain it is, they took more pains to show what they had. In that age, a fellow of high humor would drink no wine but what was strained through his mistress's smock. He would eat a pair of her shoes tossed up in a fricasee ; he would swallow tallow candles instead of toasted cheese, and even run naked about town, as it was then said, to divert the ladies. In short, that was the age of such kind of wit as is the most distant of all others from wisdom.

Mr. Nash, as he sometimes played tricks with others, upon certain occasions received very severe retaliations. Being at York, and having lost all his money, some of his companions agreed to equip him with fifty guineas, upon this proviso, that he would stand at the great door of the Minster in a blanket, as the people were coming out of church. To this proposal he readily agreed ; but the Dean passing by, unfortunately knew him. "What !" cried the divine, "Nash in masquerade?" — "Only a Yorkshire penance, Mr. Dean, for keeping bad company," said Nash, pointing to his companions.

Some time after this, he won a wager of still greater consequence, by riding naked through a village upon a cow. This was then thought a harmless frolic ; at present it would be looked upon with detestation.

He was once invited by some gentlemen of the navy

on board a man-of-war, that had sailing-orders for the Mediterranean. This was soon after the affair of the revels, and being ignorant of any design against him, he took his bottle with freedom. But he soon found, to use the expression then in fashion, that he was absolutely "bitten." The ship sailed away before he was aware of his situation, and he was obliged to make the voyage in the company where he had spent the night.

Many lives are often passed without a single adventure, and I do not know of any in the life of our hero that can be called such, except what we are now relating. During this voyage, he was in an engagement, in which his particular friend was killed by his side, and he himself wounded in the leg. For the anecdote of his being wounded we are solely to trust to his own veracity ; but most of his acquaintance were not much inclined to believe him, when he boasted on those occasions. Telling one day of the wound he had received for his country, in one of the public rooms at Bath (Wiltshire's, if I do not forget), a lady of distinction that sat by, said it was all false. "I protest, madam," replied he, "it is true ; and if I cannot be believed, your ladyship may, if you please, receive farther information, and feel the ball in my leg."

Nash was now fairly for life entered into a new course of gaiety and dissipation, and steady in nothing but in pursuit of variety. He was thirty years old, without fortune, or useful talents to acquire one. He had hitherto only led a life of expedients ; he thanked chance alone for his support, and having been long

precariously supported, he became, at length, totally a stranger to prudence or precaution. Not to disguise any part of his character, he was now by profession a gamester, and went on from day to day, feeling the vicissitudes of rapture and anguish, in proportion to the fluctuations of fortune.

At this time London was the only theatre in England for pleasure or intrigue. A spirit of gaming had been introduced in the licentious age of Charles II., and had by this time thriven surprisingly. Yet all its devastations were confined to London alone. To this great mart of every folly, sharpers from every country daily arrived for the winter ; but were obliged to leave the kingdom at the approach of summer, in order to open a new campaign at Aix, Spa, or the Hague. Bath, Tunbridge, Scarborough, and other places of the same kind here, were then frequented only by such as really went for relief : the pleasures they afforded were merely rural ; the company splenetic, rustic, and vulgar. In this situation of things, people of fashion had no agreeable summer retreat from the town, and usually spent that season amidst a solitude of country squires, parsons' wives, and visiting tenants, or farmers ; they wanted some place where they might have each other's company, and win each other's money, as they had done during the winter in town.

To a person who does not thus calmly trace things to their source, nothing will appear more strange, than how the healthy could ever consent to follow the sick to those places of spleen, and live with those whose

disorders are ever apt to excite a gloom in the spectator. The truth is, the gaming-table was properly the salutary font to which such numbers flocked. Gaming will ever be the pleasure of the rich, while men continue to be men ; while they fancy more happiness is being possessed of what they want, than they experience pleasure in the fruition of what they have. The wealthy only stake those riches which give no real content, for an expectation of riches in which they hope for satisfaction. By this calculation, they cannot lose happiness, as they begin with none ; and they hope to gain it, by being possessed of something they have not had already.

Probably upon this principle, and by the arrival of Queen Anne there, for her health, about the year 1703, the city of Bath became in some measure frequented by people of distinction. The company was numerous enough to form a country-dance upon the bowling-green : they were amused with a fiddle and hautboy, and diverted with the romantic walks round the city. They usually sauntered in fine weather in the grove, between two rows of sycamore-trees. Several learned physicians, Dr. Jorden and others, had even then praised the salubrity of the wells, and the amusements were put under the direction of a master of the ceremonies.

Captain Webster was the predecessor of Mr. Nash. This I take to be the same gentleman whom Mr. Lucas describes in his history of the lives of the Gamesters, by which it appears that Bath, even before the arrival

of Nash, was found a proper retreat for men of that profession. This gentleman, in the year 1704, carried the balls to the Town-hall, each man paying half-a-guinea each ball.

Still, however, the amusements of this place were neither elegant, nor conducted with delicacy. General society among people of rank or fortune was by no means established. The nobility still preserved a tincture of Gothic haughtiness, and refused to keep company with the gentry at any of the public entertainments of the place. Smoking in the rooms was permitted ; gentlemen and ladies appeared in a disrespectful manner at public entertainments in aprons and boots. With an eagerness common to those whose pleasures come but seldom, they generally continued them too long ; and thus they were rendered disgusting by too free an enjoyment. If the company liked each other, they danced till morning ; if any person lost at cards, he insisted on continuing the game till luck should turn. The lodgings for visitants were paltry, though expensive ; the dining-rooms and other chambers were floored with boards, colored brown with soot and small-beer, to hide the dirt ; the walls were covered with unpainted wainscot ; the furniture corresponded with the meanness of the architecture ; a few oak chairs, a small looking-glass, with a fender and tongs, composed the magnificence of these temporary habitations. The city was in itself mean and contemptible ; no elegant buildings, no open streets, nor uniform squares ! The pump-house

was without any director ; the chairmen permitted no gentlemen or ladies to walk home by night without insulting them ; and to add to all this, one of the greatest physicians of his age conceived a design of ruining the city, by writing against the efficacy of the waters. It was from a resentment of some affronts he had received there, that he took this resolution ; and accordingly published a pamphlet, by which he said, "he would cast a toad into the spring."

In this situation of things it was that Nash first came into that city, and hearing the threat of this physician, he humorously assured the people, that if they would give him leave, he would charm away the poison of the doctor's toad, as they usually charmed the venom of the tarantula, by music. He therefore was immediately empowered to set up the force of a band of music, against the poison of the doctor's reptile. The company very sensibly increased ; Nash triumphed, and the sovereignty of the city was decreed to him by every rank of people.

We are now to behold this gentleman as arrived at a new dignity, for which nature seemed to have formed him : we are to see him directing pleasures, which none had better learned to share ; placed over rebellious and refractory subjects, that were to be ruled only by the force of his address, and governing such as had been long accustomed to govern others. We see a kingdom beginning with him, and sending off Tunbridge as one of its colonies.

But to talk more simply, when we talk at best of

trifles. None could possibly conceive a person more fit to fill this employment than Nash. He had some wit, as I have said once or twice before ; but it was of that sort which is rather happy than permanent. Once a week he might say a good thing : this the little ones about him took care to divulge ; or if they happened to forget the joke, he usually remembered to repeat it himself. In a long intercourse with the world he had acquired an impenetrable assurance ; and the freedom with which he was received by the great, furnished him with vivacity which could be commanded at any time, and which some mistook for wit. His former intercourse among people of fashion in town had let him into most of the characters of the nobility ; and he was acquainted with many of their private intrigues. He understood rank and precedence with the utmost exactness ; was fond of show and finery himself, and generally set a pattern of it to others. These were his favorite talents, and he was the favorite of such as had no other.

But to balance these which some may consider as foibles, he was charitable himself, and generally shamed his betters into a similitude of sentiment, if they were not naturally so before. He was fond of advising those young men who, by youth and too much money, are taught to look upon extravagance as a virtue. He was an enemy to rudeness in others, though in the latter part of his life he did not much seem to encourage a dislike of it by his own example. None talked with more humanity of the foibles of others, when ab-

sent, than he, nor kept those secrets with which he was entrusted more inviolably. But above all (if moralists will allow it among the number of his virtues)', though he gamed high, he always played very fairly. These were his qualifications. Some of the nobility regarded him as an inoffensive, useful companion, the size of whose understanding was, in general, level with their own; but their little imitators admired him as a person of fine sense, and great good breeding. Thus people became fond of ranking him in the number of their acquaintance, told over his jests, and Beau Nash at length became the fashionable companion.

His first care when made Master of the Ceremonies, or King of Bath, as it is called, was to promote a music subscription of one guinea each, for a band, which was to consist of six performers, who were to receive a guinea a week each for their trouble. He allowed also two guineas a week for lighting and sweeping the rooms; for which he accounted to the subscribers by receipt.

The pump-house was immediately put under the care of an officer, by the name of the pumper; for which he paid the corporation an annual rent. A row of new houses was begun on the south side of the gravel-walks, before which a handsome pavement was then made for the company to walk on. Not less than seventeen or eighteen hundred pounds were raised this year and in the beginning of 1706 by subscription, and laid out in repairing the roads near the city. The streets began to be better paved, cleaned, and lighted;

the licenses of the chairmen were repressed, and by an Act of Parliament procured on this occasion, the invalids, who came to drink or bathe, were exempted from all manner of toll, as often as they should go out of the city for recreation.

The houses and streets now began to improve, and ornaments were lavished upon them even to profusion. But in the midst of this splendor, the company still were obliged to assemble in a booth to drink tea and chocolate, or to game. Mr. Nash undertook to remedy this inconvenience, and by his direction, one Thomas Harrison erected a handsome assembly-house for these purposes. A better band of music was also procured, and the former subscription of one guinea was raised to two. Harrison had three guineas a week for the room and candles, and the music two guineas a man. The money Mr. Nash received and accounted for with the utmost exactness and punctuality. To this house were also added gardens for people of rank and fashion to walk in; and the beauty of the suburbs continued to increase, notwithstanding the opposition that was made by the corporation; who at that time looked upon every useful improvement, particularly without the walls, as dangerous to the inhabitants within.

His dominion was now extensive and secure, and he determined to support it with the strictest attention. But in order to proceed in everything like a King, he was resolved to give his subjects a law, and the following Rules were accordingly put up in the pump-room:—

RULES TO BE OBSERVED AT BATH.

1. "That a visit of ceremony at first coming, and another at going away, are all that is expected or desired by ladies of quality and fashion, — except impertinents.

2. "That ladies coming to the ball appoint a time for their footmen coming to wait on them home, to prevent disturbance and inconveniences to themselves and others.

3. "That gentlemen of fashion never appearing in a morning before the ladies in gowns and caps, show breeding and respect.

4. "That no person take it ill that any one goes to another's play or breakfast, and not theirs, — except captious by nature.

5. "That no gentleman give his ticket for the balls to any but gentlewomen. — N.B. Unless he has none of his acquaintance.

6. "That gentlemen crowding before the ladies at the ball, show ill-manners; and that none do so for the future, — except such as respect nobody but themselves.

7. "That no gentleman or lady take it ill that another dances before them, — except such as have no pretence to dance at all.

8. "That the elder ladies and children be content with a second bench at the ball, as being past or not come to perfection.

9. "That the younger ladies take notice how many eyes observe them. — N.B. This does not extend to the Have-at-alls.

10. "That all whisperers of lies and scandal be taken for their authors.

11. "That all repeaters of such lies and scandal be shunned by all company, — except such as have been guilty of the same crime. — N.B. Several men of no character, old women and young ones of questioned reputation, are great authors of lies in these places, being of the sect of levellers."

These laws were written by Mr. Nash himself, and by the manner in which they are drawn up, he undoubtedly designed them for wit. The reader, however, it is feared, will think them dull. But Nash was not born a writer ; for whatever humor he might have in conversation, he used to call a pen his torpedo : whenever he grasped it, it benumbed all his faculties.

But were we to give laws to a nursery, we should make them childish laws ; his statutes, though stupid, were addressed to fine gentlemen and ladies, and were probably received with sympathetic approbation. It is certain they were in general religiously observed by his subjects, and executed by him with impartiality ; neither rank nor fortune shielded the refractory from his resentment.

The balls, by his directions, were to begin at six, and to end at eleven. Nor would he suffer them to continue a moment longer, lest invalids might commit irregularities, to counteract the benefit of the waters. Everything was to be performed in proper order. Each ball was to open with a minuet, danced by two persons of the highest distinction present. When the minuet concluded, the lady was to return to her seat, and Nash was to bring the gentleman a new partner. This ceremony was to be observed by every succeeding couple ; every gentleman being obliged to dance with two ladies till the minuets were over, which generally continued two hours. At eight the country-dances were to begin ; ladies of quality, according to their rank, standing up first. About nine o'clock a

short interval was allowed for rest, and for the gentlemen to help their partners to tea. That over, the company were to pursue their amusements till the clock struck eleven. Then the master of the ceremonies entering the ball-room, ordered the music to desist by lifting up his finger. The dances discontinued, and some time allowed for becoming cool, the ladies were handed to their chairs.

Even the royal family themselves had not influence enough to make him deviate from any of these rules. The Princess Amelia once applying to him for one dance more, after he had given the signal to withdraw, he assured her royal highness, that the established rules of Bath resembled the laws of Lycurgus, which would admit of no alteration, without an utter subversion of all his authority.

He was not less strict with regard to the dresses in which ladies and gentlemen were to appear. He had the strongest aversion to a white apron, and absolutely excluded all who ventured to appear at the assembly dressed in that manner. I have known him on a ball night strip even the Duchess of Q —, and throw her apron at one of the hinder benches among the ladies' women: observing, that none but Abigails appeared in white aprons. This from another would be an insult; in him it was considered as a just reprimand, and the good-natured duchess acquiesced in his censure.

But he found more difficulty in attacking the gentleman's irregularities; and for some time strove, but in

vain, to prohibit the use of swords. Disputes arising from love of play were sometimes attended with fatal effects. To use his own expression, he was resolved to hinder people from doing "what they had no mind to;" but for some time without effect. However, there happened about that time a duel between two gamesters, whose names were Taylor and Clarke, which helped to promote his peaceable intentions. They fought by torchlight, in the grove; Taylor was run through the body, but lived seven years after, at which time his wound breaking out afresh, it caused his death. Clarke from that time pretended to be a Quaker, but the orthodox brethren never cordially received him among their number; and he died at London, about eighteen years after, in poverty and contrition. From that time it was thought necessary to forbid the wearing of swords at Bath, as they often tore the ladies clothes, and frightened them, by sometimes appearing upon trifling occasions. Whenever, therefore, Nash heard of a challenge given or accepted, he instantly had both parties arrested. The gentleman's boots also made a very desperate stand against him; the country squires were by no means submissive to his usurpations, and probably his authority alone would never have carried him through, had he not reinforced it with ridicule. He wrote a song upon the occasion, which, for the honor of his poetical talents, the world shall see.

FRONTINELLA'S INVITATION TO THE ASSEMBLY.

Come, one and all, to Hoyden Hall,
For there's the assembly this night;
None but rude fools
Mind manners and rules;
We Hoydens do decency slight.
Come, trollops and slatterns,
Cocked hats and white aprons,
This best our modesty suits;
For why should not we
In dress be as free
As Hogs-Norton squires in boots?

The keenness, severity, and particularly the good rhymes of this little *morçeau*, which was at that time highly relished by many of the nobility at Bath, gained him a temporary triumph. But to push his victories, he got up a puppet-show, in which Punch came in booted and spurred, in the character of a country squire. He was introduced as courting his mistress, and having obtained her consent to comply with his wishes, upon going to bed, he is desired to pull off his boots. "My boots!" replies Punch; "why, madam, you may as well bid me pull off my legs. I never go without boots; I never ride, I never dance, without them, and this piece of politeness is quite the thing at Bath. We always dance at our town in boots, and the ladies often move minuets in riding-hoods." Thus he goes on, till his mistress, grown impatient, kicks him off the stage.

From that time few ventured to be seen at the assemblies in Bath in a riding-dress; and whenever any gentleman, through ignorance or haste, appeared in the rooms in boots, Nash would make up to him, and bowing in an arch manner, would tell him that he had "forgot his horse." Thus he was at last completely victorious.

"Dolisque coacti

Quos neque Tydides nec Larissæus Achilles
Non anni domûere decem."

Every season brought some new accession of honor to Nash; and the corporation now universally found that he was absolutely necessary for promoting the welfare of the city; so that this year seems to have been the meridian of his glory. About this time he arrived at such a pitch of authority, that I really believe Alexander was not greater at Persepolis. The countenance he received from the Prince of Orange, the favor he was in with the Prince of Wales, and the caresses of the nobility, all conspired to lift him to the utmost pitch of vanity. The exultation of a little mind, upon being admitted to the familiarity of the great, is inexpressible. The Prince of Orange had made him a present of a very fine snuff-box. Upon this some of the nobility thought it would be proper to give snuff-boxes too; they were quickly imitated by the middling gentry, and it soon became the fashion to give Nash snuff-boxes, who had in a little time a number sufficient to have furnished a good toy-shop.

To add to his honors, there was placed a full-length picture of him in Wiltshire's Ball-room, between the busts of Newton and Pope. It was upon this occasion that the Earl of Chesterfield wrote the following severe but witty epigram : —

“ Immortal Newton never spoke
More truth, than here you'll find,
Nor Pope himself e'er penn'd a joke
More cruel on mankind.

“ The picture placed the busts between
Gives satire its full strength ;
Wisdom and Wit are little seen,
But Folly at full length.”

There is also a full-length picture of Mr. Nash in Simpson's Ball-room, and his statue at full-length in the Pump-room, with a plan of the Bath Hospital in his hand. He was now treated in every respect like a great man ; he had his levee, his flatterers, his buffoons, his good-natured creatures, and even his dedicators. A trifling, ill-supported vanity was his foible ; and while he received the homage of the vulgar and enjoyed the familiarity of the great, he felt no pain for the unpromising view of poverty that lay before him : he enjoyed the world as it went, and drew upon content for the deficiencies of fortune. If a cringing wretch called him “ his Honor,” he was pleased ; internally conscious that he had the justest pretensions to the title. If a beggar called him “ my Lord,” he was happy, and generally sent the flatterer off happy

too. I have known him, in London, wait a whole day at a window in the Smyrna Coffee-house, in order to receive a bow from the Prince, or the Duchess of Marlborough, as they passed by where he was standing, and he would then look round upon the company for admiration and respect.

But perhaps the reader desires to know who could be low enough to flatter a man who himself lived in some measure by dependence. Hundreds are ready upon those occasions. The very needy are almost ever flatterers. A man in wretched circumstances forgets his own value, and feels no pain in giving up superiority to every claimant. The very vain are ever flatterers ; as they find it necessary to make use of all their arts to keep company with such as are superior to themselves. But particularly the prodigal are prone to adulation, in order to open new supplies for their extravagance. The poor, the vain, and the extravagant are chiefly addicted to this vice : and such hung upon his good-nature. When these three characters are found united in one person, the composition generally becomes a great man's favorite. It was not difficult to collect such a group in a city that was the centre of pleasure. Nash had them of all sizes, from the half-pay captain in laced clothes, to the humble boot-catcher at the Bear.

Among other stories of Nash's telling, I remember one, which I the more cheerfully repeat, as it tends to correct a piece of impertinence that reigns in almost every country assembly. The principal inhabitants of

a certain market-town at a distance from the capital, in order to encourage that harmony which ought to subsist in society, and to promote a mutual intercourse between the sexes, so desirable to both and so necessary for all, had established a monthly assembly in the town-hall, which was conducted with such decency, decorum, and politeness, that it drew the attention of the gentlemen and ladies in the neighborhood, and a nobleman and his family continually honored them with their presence. This naturally drew others, and in time the room was crowded with what the world calls good company; and the assembly prospered, till some of the newly admitted ladies took it into their heads that the tradesmen's daughters were unworthy of their notice, and therefore refused to join hands with them in the dance. This was complained of by the town ladies, and that complaint was resented by the country gentlemen; who, more pert than wise, publicly advertised that they would not dance with tradesmen's daughters. This the most eminent tradesmen considered as an insult on themselves, and being men of worth, and able to live independently, they in return advertised that they would give no credit out of their town, and desired all others to discharge their accounts. A general uneasiness ensued; some writs were actually issued out, and much distress would have happened, had not my lord, who sided with no party, kindly interfered and composed the difference. The assembly however was ruined, and the families, I am told, are not friends yet, though this affair happened thirty years ago.

Nothing debases human nature so much as pride. This Nash knew, and endeavored to stifle every emotion of it at Bath. When he observed any ladies so extremely delicate and proud of a pedigree, as to only touch the back of an inferior's hand in the dance, he always called to order, and desired them to leave the room or behave with common decency; and when any ladies and gentlemen drew off, after they had gone down a dance, without standing up till the dance was finished, he made up to them, and after asking whether they had done dancing, told them they should dance no more unless they stood up for the rest; and on these occasions he always was as good as his word.

Nash, though no great wit, had the art of sometimes saying rude things with decency, and rendering them pleasing by an uncommon turn. But most of the good things attributed to him, which have found their way into the jest-books, are no better than puns. The smartest things I have seen are against him. One day in the Grové he joined some ladies, and asking one of them who was crooked, whence she came? she replied, "Straight from London." — "Confound me, madam," said he, "then you must have been damnablely warped by the way."

She soon, however, had ample revenge. Sitting the following evening in one of the rooms, he once more joined her company, and with a sneer and bow asked her if she knew her catechism, and could tell the name of Tobit's dog? "His name, sir, was Nash," replied the lady, "and an impudent dog he was." This

story is told in a celebrated romance ; I only repeat it here to have an opportunity of observing, that it actually happened.

Queen Anne once asked him, why he would not accept of knighthood? To which he replied, lest Sir William Read, the mountebank, who had been just knighted, should call him brother.

A house in Bath was said to be haunted by the devil, and a great noise was made about it, when Nash going to the minister of St. Michael's, entreated him to drive the devil out of Bath forever, if it were only to oblige the ladies.

Nash used sometimes to visit the great Doctor Clarke. The doctor was one day conversing with Locke, and two or three more of his learned and intimate companions, with that freedom, gaiety, and cheerfulness, which is ever the result of innocence. In the midst of their mirth and laughter, the doctor, looking from the window, saw Nash's chariot stop at the door. "Boys, boys," cried the philosopher to his friends, "let us now be wise, for here is a fool coming."

Nash was one day complaining in the following manner to the Earl of Chesterfield, of his bad luck at play. "Would you think it, my lord, that damned bitch fortune, no later than last night, tricked me out of five hundred. Is it not surprising," continued he, "that my luck should never turn — that I should thus eternally be mauled?" — "I don't wonder at your losing money, Nash," said his lordship, "but all the world is surprised where you get it to lose."

Dr. Cheyne once, when Nash was ill, drew up a prescription for him, which was sent in accordingly. The next day the doctor coming to see his patient, found him up and well ; upon which he asked if he had followed his prescription. "Followed your prescription," cried Nash, "no. Egad, if I had, I should have broke my neck, for I flung it out of the two pair of stairs window."

It would have been well had he confined himself to such sallies ; but as he grew old he grew insolent, and seemed, in some measure, insensible of the pain his attempts to be a wit gave others. Upon asking a lady to dance a minuet, if she refused he would often demand if she had got bandy legs. He would attempt to ridicule natural defects ; he forgot the deference due to birth and quality, and mistook the manner of settling rank and precedence upon many occasions. He now seemed no longer fashionable among the present race of gentry ; he grew peevish and fretful, and they who only saw the remnant of a man, severely returned that laughter upon him which he had once lavished upon others.

Poor Nash was no longer the gay, thoughtless, idly industrious creature he once was ; he now forgot how to supply new modes of entertainment, and became too rigid to wind with ease through the vicissitudes of fashion. The evening of his life began to grow cloudy. His fortune was gone, and nothing but poverty lay in prospect. To embitter his hopes, he found himself abandoned by the great, whom he had long endeav-

ored to serve ; and was obliged to fly to those of humbler stations for protection, whom he once affected to despise. He now began to want that charity which he had never refused to any ; and to find that a life of dissipation and gaiety is ever terminated by misery and regret. Even his place of master of the ceremonies (if I can trust the papers he has left behind him) was sought after.

He found poverty now denied him the indulgence not only of his favorite follies, but of his favorite virtues. The poor solicited him in vain ; for he was himself a more pitiable object than they. The child of the public seldom has a friend, and he who once exercised his wit at the expense of others, must naturally have enemies. Exasperated at last to the highest degree, an unaccountable whim struck him. Poor Nash was resolved to become an author ; he who, in the vigor of manhood, was incapable of the task, now at the impotent age of eighty-six, was determined to write his own history ! From the many specimens already given of his style, the reader will not much regret that the historian was interrupted in his design. Yet, as Montaigne observes, as the adventures of an infant, if an infant could inform us of them, would be pleasing, so the life of a beau, if a beau could write, would certainly serve to regale curiosity.

Whether he really intended to put this design in execution, or did it only to alarm the nobility, I will not take upon me to determine ; but certain it is, that his friends went about collecting subscriptions for the

work, and he received several encouragements from such as were willing to be politely charitable. It was thought by many, that this history would reveal the intrigues of a whole age; that he had numberless secrets to disclose; but they never considered, that persons of public character like him were the most unlikely in the world to be made partakers of those secrets which people desired the public should not know. In fact, he had few secrets to discover, and those he had are buried with him in the grave.

For some time before his decease nature gave warning of his approaching dissolution. The worn machine had run itself down to an utter impossibility of repair; he saw that he must die, and shuddered at the thought. His virtues were not of the great, but the amiable kind; so that fortitude was not among the number. Anxious, timid, his thoughts still hanging on a receding world, he desired to enjoy a little longer that life, the miseries of which he had experienced so long. The poor unsuccessful gamester husbanded the wasting moments with an increased desire to continue the game, and to the last eagerly wished for one yet more happy throw. He died at his house in St. John's Court, Bath, on the 12th of February, 1761, aged eighty-seven years, three months, and some days.

His death was sincerely regretted by the city, to which he had been so long and so great a benefactor. The day after he died, the mayor called the corporation together, when they granted fifty pounds towards burying their sovereign with proper respect. After

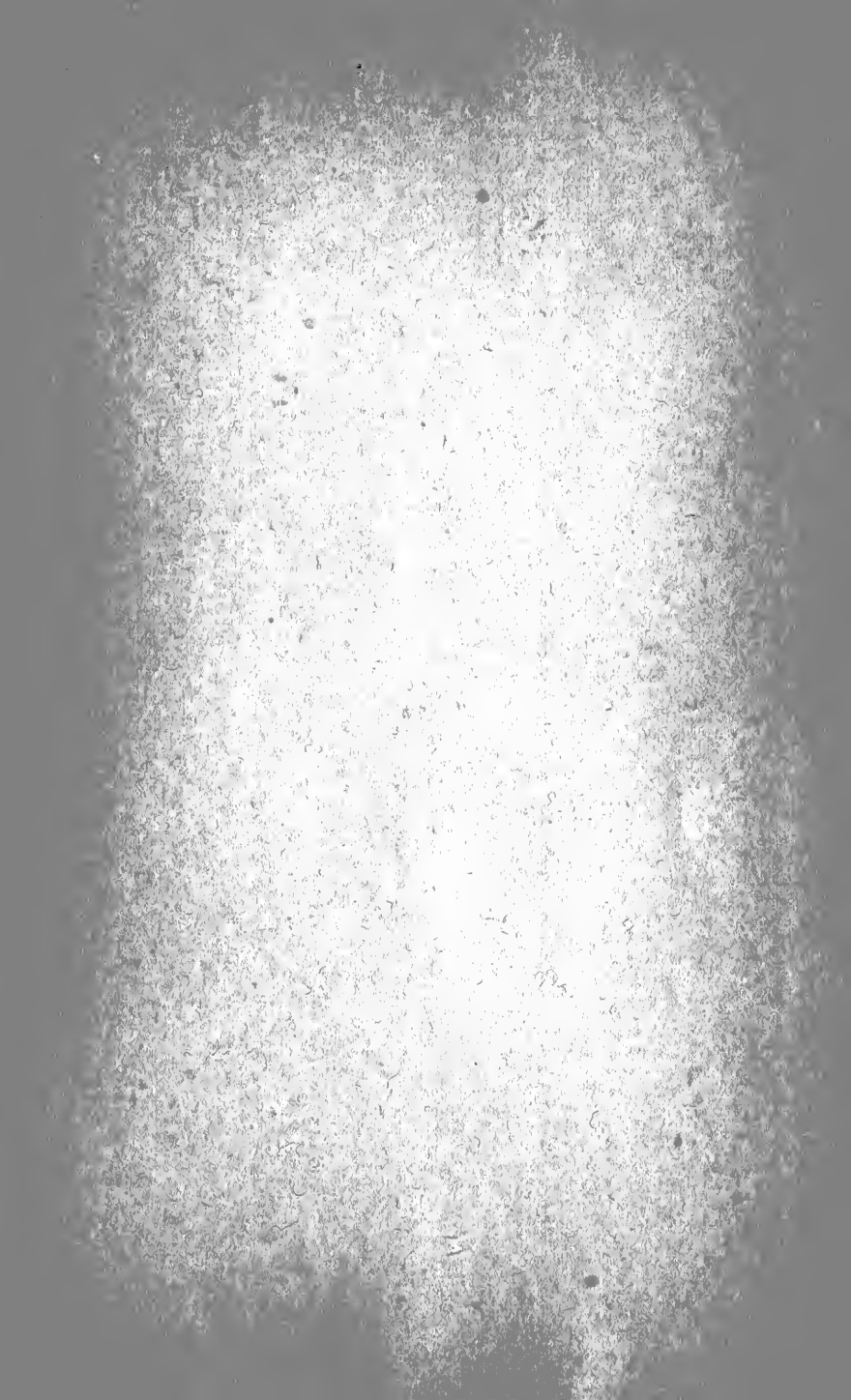
the corpse had lain four days, it was conveyed to the Abbey church in that city, with a solemnity somewhat peculiar to his character. About five the procession moved from his house ; the charity-girls, two and two, preceded ; next the boys of the charity-school, singing a solemn occasional hymn. Next marched the city music, and his own band, sounding at proper intervals a dirge. Three clergymen immediately preceded the coffin, which was adorned with sable plumes, and the pall supported by the six senior aldermen. The masters of the assembly-rooms followed as chief mourners ; the beadles of that hospital which he had contributed so largely to endow, went next ; and last of all the poor patients themselves, the lame, the emaciated, and the feeble, followed their old benefactor to his grave, shedding unfeigned tears, and lamenting themselves in him.

The crowd was so great, that not only the streets were filled, but, as one of the journals in a rant expresses it, "even the tops of the houses were covered with spectators. Each thought the occasion affected themselves most ; as when a real king dies, they asked each other, 'Where shall we find such another ?' Sorrow sate upon every face, and even children lisped that their Sovereign was no more. The awfulness of the solemnity made the deepest impression on the minds of the distressed inhabitants. The peasant discontinued his toil, the ox rested from the plough ; all nature seemed to sympathize with their loss, and the muffled bells rung a peal of bob-majors."

Our deepest solemnities have something truly ridiculous in them. There is somewhat ludicrous in the folly of historians, who thus declaim upon the death of kings and princes, as if there was anything dismal, or anything unusual, in it. "For my part," says Poggi, the Florentine, "I can no more grieve for another's death than I could for my own. I have ever regarded death as a very trifling affair, nor can black staves, long cloaks, or mourning coaches, in the least influence my spirits. Let us live here as long and as merrily as we can ; and when we must die, why, let us die merrily too, but die so as to be happy."











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